

**GOP'S RACE CARD ■ LARRY SUMMERS BEGS FOR MERCY**

FEBRUARY 28, 2005

# The American Conservative

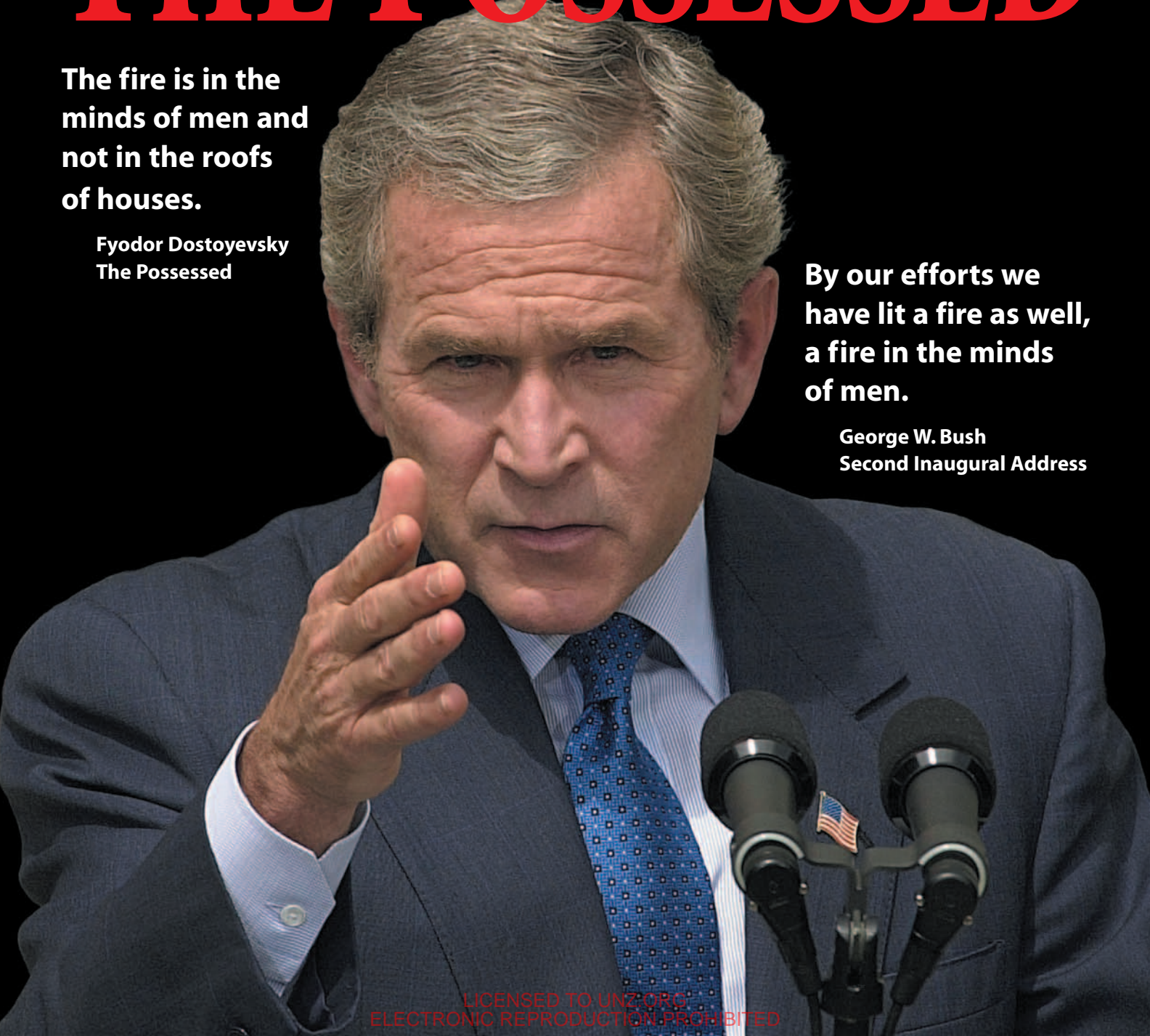
## THE POSSESSED

**The fire is in the  
minds of men and  
not in the roofs  
of houses.**

**Fyodor Dostoyevsky  
The Possessed**

**By our efforts we  
have lit a fire as well,  
a fire in the minds  
of men.**

**George W. Bush  
Second Inaugural Address**



## SO MUCH, SO LITTLE

Please thank Mr. Reed for his article (Jan. 31). It expresses many of the ideas that I have tried to explain to the sideline patriots who litter the landscape.

I am a retired military officer, and the author is correct: I do not remember the people I was sent to fight, but I remember the people who sent me. If the cause was so noble and worthwhile, why were they not willing to go or send their children to help?

I am one of those people from a place with no traffic lights. I was taught that service to your country was not an option; it was a duty. Now I speak with other men of my age who did not serve, who stayed home and flew the flag one day a year and became financially comfortable during the various boom periods that occurred. They cannot understand why anyone would go carry a rifle unless he were forced. It is for people not quite smart enough to make a living any other way.

Deep down, some of us regret having done so much while others did so little.

D. BELLES  
*via e-mail*

## OVER-EDUCATED LIBERAL

Thank you, Mr. Reed! Amen, and well said. I would normally not read your publication, and some people would call me a liberal. Frankly, I don't know what the terms liberal and conservative mean anymore. I'm more in favor of spending tax money responsibly and limiting government's attempts at social engineering than many people who call themselves conservatives.

The liberal/conservative divide breaks down when it comes to this war as well. Mr. Reed is right; I'm mostly insulated from direct contact with the war and its effects. I don't know any enlisted soldiers firsthand. I do, however, have a friend who is a Navy psychiatrist who has to counsel officers, who are losing their will to send their troops into the line of fire, and troops who will have to go back into battle again when their physical injuries heal. It's a soul-wrenching job, and I salute him.

Mr. Reed, I plead guilty to being an over-educated liberal. But don't think that I am removed from this useless waste of human life. Don't think my blood doesn't boil when I think of the ignorant arrogance that went into creating this mess. I'm out there with my picket sign, I'm writing my senators and congressman, and talking to my friends and family. If your people and my people join forces, think what we could do.

NANCY MCGUIRE  
*Silver Spring, Md.*

## PROUD TO SERVE

Fred Reed is nowhere near a conservative. His view that enlisted soldiers are a political liability is way out in left field. Just this week, a national news network featured several of the wounded at Walter Reed and discussed their wounds and treatment.

Reed would have us believe that these people are throwaways nobody cares about because they are "uneducated" or do not have a connection to the powerful. As a drill sergeant, I was privileged to have trained some of these young soldiers. They truly are the best and the brightest our nation has to offer.

If I were to read into what Mr. Reed was trying to say, I would believe he is trying to go into isolationist mode. He wants to bury his head in the sand and not deal with the rest of the world. I believe it is much better to carry the fight to the enemy.

I have spent the last 14.5 years wearing the uniform of my country, and I am proud of my service here in the U.S., on foreign shores, and in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I was part of giving a country the greatest gift they could ever hope to have—freedom.

STEVE SCHALTENBAND  
*via e-mail*

## CIVICS LESSON

It bothers me that Professor Payne refers to this country as a democracy and your editors let him (Jan. 31). This country was not created as a democracy but as a republic.

The Founding Fathers had serious concerns about true democracies and never had any desire to establish one here. The republican form of government most closely guarantees the "unalienable rights" Thomas Jefferson talked about in the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence, while a true democracy offers no such protection. That is why we see so many problems with the "democracies" to which Payne refers: they don't support the doctrine of unalienable rights that is essential for a free society. There is a quote attributed to Ben Franklin—"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to eat for lunch. Liberty is a well armed sheep disputing the vote." In true democracies, the lamb gets eaten. In a republic, which is what the Founders created, the unalienable right to life of the lamb is respected.

In the future, could your magazine quit referring to this country as a democracy even if it is sadly evolving that way?  
DAVID HUSAR  
*Arlington, Va.*

## BOEING IN BUSINESS SCHOOL

I was fascinated—and horrified—to read Eamonn Fingleton's cover story (Jan. 31). His points are well taken and extremely well documented. I intend to discuss this story in depth in an MBA strategy class that I teach. Most, if not all, of the current crop of strategy texts extol the virtues of "rationalizing the value chain"—read, "outsource wherever possible".

THOMAS M. BOX  
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*Pittsburg, Kan.*

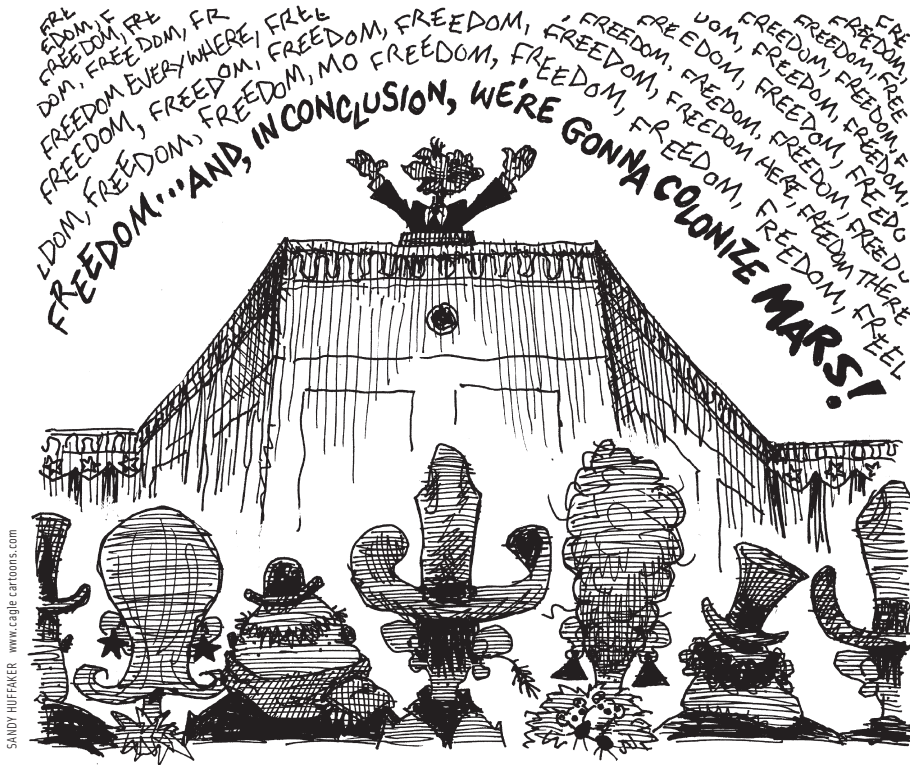
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[STATE OF THE UNION]

## MORNING AFTER

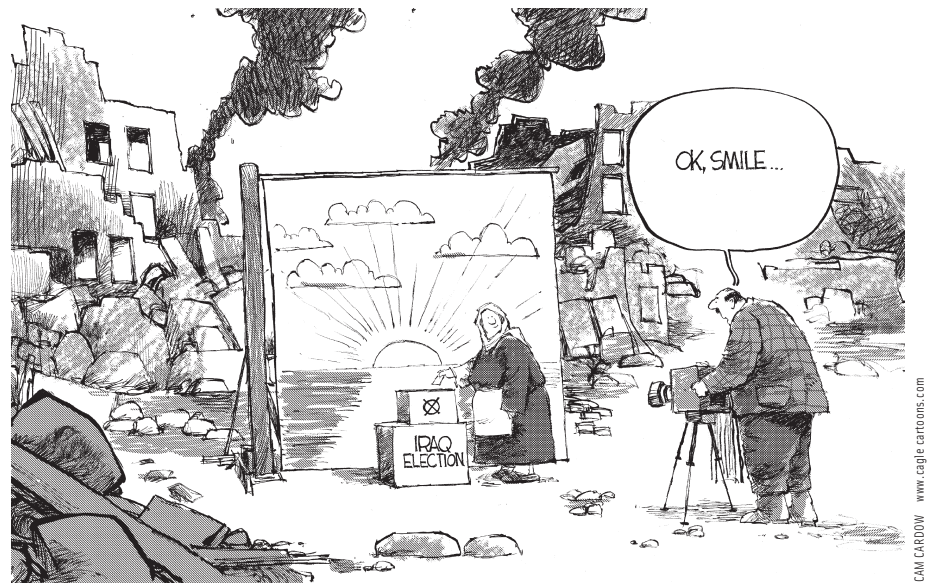
As we go to press, late-breaking thoughts on the State of the Union ... We were struck by just how many of President Bush's initiatives are entirely outside the purview of government: now the administration is responsible for ending "apathy" and instilling an "ideal of manhood" in the inner-city. Apparently this falls under Laura's domain. Good luck with that ... The amnesty plan that dare not speak its name will fill "jobs Americans will not take." Wonder how they got done before the illegal immigration surge? (On a related note, that morning Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla.) made history by delivering the first non-English speech on the Senate floor.) ... Bush included the Palestinian elections in the great wave of democracy he claims is sweeping the Middle East. We know who kept the Iraqis from voting, but who prevented the Palestinians from holding an election? Just asking...

[ELECTION: THERE]

## QUALIFIED VICTORY

Iraq's Jan. 30 vote was probably an historic occurrence—without providing a very clear sense of where the history might lead. At this writing, we don't know which "lists" won the election or by how much, which may be the minimal requirement for informed speculation. Clearly the substantial turnout was a defeat for the Iraqi factions that tried to suppress the vote and is therefore a welcome development. Just as clearly, the images of Iraqis going to the polls—broadcast to an Arab world where such occurrences are rare—may have considerable repercussions.

Another plainly positive consequence of the vote is that it underscores that parts of Iraq are now quite secure and that American forces could leave. An announcement that all foreign troops would be withdrawn from the Shia-dom-



inated south in the next few months would go a long way towards undercutting the charge, widely credited in the Arab world, that the U.S. has designs to colonize Iraq for its oil.

The vote also raises the possibility that a new, largely Shia Iraqi government will eventually ask the Americans to leave. This is likely the best of possible outcomes, allowing us to jettison the job of ruling Iraq in a dignified manner. President Bush could proclaim victory, and the Iraqis could commence the rebuilding of their country.

[ELECTION: HERE]

## DUAL LOYALTIES

As voting began in Iraq's election, one elated poll worker told the AP, "We feel happy now. This is like America, this voting." She wasn't exaggerating—she was voting in Detroit, along with hundreds of other expatriates who also cast ballots in Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Nashville.

The International Organization for Migration, which conducted the expat voting, set broad requirements for eligibility. Past as well as present Iraqi citizens could vote, as could anyone born in Iraq or to an Iraqi father. Beyond that, voters had only to have turned 18 by Dec. 31. About 26,000 expatriates registered to vote in the U.S.

The election is over, but we wonder whether Americans have heard the last of expatriate voting on these shores. There are some 10 million Mexicans in the U.S., many of whom would like to vote in their native land's elections.

Mexican President Vicente Fox has vowed to help them do so. With the precedent Iraqi expat voting has set, we may soon find that the elections taking place within our borders are not always for Americans.

[PENTAGON]

## AMBASSADOR FEITH

Douglas Feith is leaving his perch as Pentagon number three this summer "to spend more time with his family." Simply put, his family's gain is also the country's—but that hardly does justice to Feith's importance. He is one of the principal authors of the unnecessary invasion of Iraq and a figure whose bureaucratic savvy made the war possible in a way that those who wrote articles urging "World War IV" or "An End to Evil" couldn't come close to matching. Never in our history has an undersecretary of defense played a larger role.

To convince the president and vice president to start an elective war against a country that posed no threat to America, there needed to be a way to circumvent the intelligence analyses of the CIA and State Department, both of which were skeptical about neocon claims of an Iraqi WMD menace and charges of Iraqi links to al-Qaeda. Feith overcame this challenge by creating his own intelligence shop within the Pentagon, the Office of Special Plans, which fed unsubstantiated scraps of intelligence directly to the vice president's office and thus to George W. Bush. Making an end run around the CIA and the State Department Intelligence and Research

division may have been the only way to goad the country into war.

Feith's closeness to Israel's Likud Party is legendary. Israeli generals were allowed to bound into his Pentagon office without conforming to the post 9/11 sign-in regulations; he is a business partner with an American turned right-wing Israeli settler spokesman, Marc Zell; he was a drafter of the infamous "securing the realm" document for Likud, which laid out, in 1996, the overthrow of Saddam as desirable for Israel's security and advised Israel's incoming prime minister to undermine the Oslo peace process. The intimacy of his ties raised eyebrows even in the Bush administration: when Feith, standing in for Rumsfeld at a principals' meeting on Mideast policy, finished his statement, Condi Rice reportedly remarked, "Thanks Doug, but when we want the Israeli position we'll invite the ambassador."

Feith has also been questioned by the FBI about the leaking of secret American documents by one of his underlings to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an investigation that is still ongoing.

It is good for America's security that he will soon not be in a position of power. The downside is that once President Bush's Iraq policy is demonstrated to be an unmistakable failure, Feith won't be around to shoulder responsibility. In all likelihood, he will by then be a television talking head, blaming the disaster on pusillanimous military officers and "Arabists" in the State Department. The people who hired him and let him exercise the power he did are unlikely to be as able to evade accountability.

#### [ECONOMICS]

### THAT SINKING FEELING

Sometimes we would rather not be right, but within days, our last cover story proved prescient. Economist Paul Craig Roberts wrote, "Foreign central banks, primarily in Japan and China, are

supporting the dollar by purchasing U.S. government bonds. ...[But] the dollar's decline of 70 percent against gold and 53 percent against the euro means that [they] are paying a high cost for their dollar holdings. At what point does this cost exceed the benefit of gaining or maintaining market share?"

We may have reached that point. Fan Gang, director of China's National Economic Research Institute, told those assembled for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, "The U.S. dollar is no longer ... a stable currency and is devaluing all the time." The dollar plumbed a new nadir against the euro in December and has been dropping relative to other major currencies amid rising international alarm about U.S. trade and budget deficits.

But the Bush administration seems unconcerned that the primary financier of American debt is getting cold feet. In the past, it dispatched Dick Cheney and Colin Powell to Davos, but this year, no marquee talent managed to make the meeting. "There's nobody home on economic policy in America right now," Stephen Roach, the chief economist at Morgan Stanley, told the *International Herald Tribune*.

#### [CULTURE]

### SEE HILLARY RUN

Sen. Hillary Clinton once again demonstrates that she learned triangulation at the foot of the master. First, she made remarks about illegal immigration that placed her ever so noticeably to the right of the Bush administration on the issue. Then, on the occasion of the feminist High Holy Day marking *Roe v. Wade's* 32nd anniversary, Clinton gave a speech taking a dim view of abortion.

Does this portend a pro-life conversion for the past first lady who may aspire to be president? Writing in *Slate*, William Saletan, a perceptive observer of abortion politics, frames her com-

ments differently: "...Clinton isn't trying to end the abortion war. She's repositioning her party to win it."

Clinton seeks to recast the pro-choice position as one that accepts abortion as a tragedy we should universally seek to avoid but rejects antiabortion laws as a big-government intrusion against individual liberty. This co-opts two themes that resonate with conservatives: moral qualms about abortion and libertarian sentiment. It also updates her husband's "safe, legal, and rare" stance to a view Saletan describes as "safe, legal, and never." Of course, the practical effect would be to make the *Roe* legal regime even more secure than it is now.

#### [BELTWAY]

### OPEN BORDERS LAME DUCK

Once more it is clear that President Bush and the Republican Party are working at cross-purposes on immigration. As the White House continues to tout a guest-worker program that will benefit its labor-seeking cronies and Hispanic-vote fantasists, the *New York Times* reports that a group of conservative House Republicans led by Congressman James Sensenbrenner has introduced a measure to keep illegals from gaining drivers' licenses.

The House is going to be a continuing problem for Bush's plan to push amnesty and invite new foreign-labor competition into the country; many of the Republicans leading committees with jurisdiction are inalterably opposed. Sensenbrenner chairs the House Judiciary Committee, and Congressional Immigration Caucus member John Hostettler chairs its immigration subcommittee. Both have consistently thwarted the administration's open-borders initiatives.

While things look better for the administration in the Senate, if the dynamics in the House remain unaltered, Bush may already in his second term be a lame duck on the immigration issue.



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### [IMMIGRATION]

#### BORDER PATROL PATROL

Few Americans realize that over 10,000 illegal immigrants—more than the populations of many U.S. towns—cross our southern border daily. Far fewer do anything about it. But not James Gilchrist. The Vietnam-wounded Marine and retired accountant has rallied 240 volunteers from 37 states to his “Minuteman Project,” a 30-day campaign to draw attention to the government’s failure to enforce our immigration laws. Beginning April 1, these self-appointed “Americans doing the job Congress won’t do” will camp in tents and RVs in Arizona’s San Pedro River Valley—a particularly porous section of the border—to conduct round-the-clock surveillance and report illegal crossings.

Despite charges of vigilantism, Gilchrist maintains that his group’s goal is “to assist the U.S. Border Patrol, not interfere with them, not take the law into our own hands.” His Minutemen will not confront or detain immigrants, and Gilchrist screened all volunteers—“We don’t want guys in white sheets.” This doesn’t mean that the usual suspects aren’t abuzz: the Southern Poverty Law Center is “monitoring” the project. But this hasn’t deterred these modern Minutemen from dashing to their country’s aid.

### [POLITICS]

#### THE ONE WHO BRUNG YOU

Values voters returned President Bush to office. So what has Bush made his top priority at the start of his second term? Social Security reform, of course. If that seems a little incongruous, don’t worry, the Arlington Group, a coalition of Christian conservative organizations, thinks so too—and they’re mad as, well, heck. Mad enough, in fact, that they’re pledging to torpedo Social Security reform unless Bush backs an amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

“We couldn’t help but notice the contrast between how the president is approaching the difficult issue of Social Security privatization where the public is deeply divided and the marriage issue where public opinion is overwhelmingly on his side,” read a Jan. 18 letter from the coalition to Karl Rove. “When the administration adopts a defeatist attitude on an issue that is at the top of our agenda, it becomes impossible for us to unite our movement on an issue such as Social Security privatization where there are already deep misgivings,” the letter warned.

The Arlington Group might have the muscle to make good on its threat; its members include leaders of such Religious Right groups as Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the American Family Association. When Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council was asked by the *New York Times* to grade the group’s dissatisfaction with the White House on a scale of 1 to 10, “Mr. Perkins put it at 8.”

There’s a theory (put forth most recently by liberal author Tom Frank) that holds that when Republicans are in power, pro-business constituencies always get what they want and social conservatives rarely do. The face-off between the administration and those who rank stopping gay marriage before Social Security reform will put this theory to a definitive test.

### [JUSTICE]

#### LEASH LAWS?

*Ironie Times* on the modest Mr. Ashcroft’s replacement—the only attorney general nominee ever forced to assure the Senate that he doesn’t support torture: “Alberto Gonzales to Remove Covering From Breast of Statue In Dept. of Justice: Orders all statues stripped, piled on top of each other in lobby.” ■

[you say you want a revolution]

# Radical Son

Bush may not have read Dostoyevsky—but his speechwriters have.

By Justin Raimondo

IN A WORLD AFLAME with war and terrorism, George W. Bush's second inaugural address was a match flung onto an oil slick. By the time his 17-minute peroration reached midpoint, it was clear that was his intention:

Because we have acted in the great liberating tradition of this nation, tens of millions have achieved their freedom. And as hope kindles hope, millions more will find it. By our efforts we have lit a fire as well, a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power; it burns those who fight its progress. And one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world.

"A fire in the mind"—such a felicitous phrase. It aptly and succinctly describes the feverish mental state of our neoconservative policymakers, who set out to build an empire in the Middle East and now, with this speech, clearly envision much more. It also describes the mental state of some of the characters in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* (or *The Devils*), from which the fiery metaphor is taken. Michael Barone pointed out the allusion in his *U.S. News* column, wherein he described Dostoyevsky's work as "a novel about a provincial town inspired by new revolutionary ideas. After a turbulent literary evening, a fire breaks out, and one townsman says, 'The fire is in the minds of men, not in the roofs of buildings.'"

Well, not quite. The novel is about a group of revolutionaries who plot the destruction of a small provincial town—and, by extension, the whole of Russia and of human civilization. The intricate plot involves the governor of the province, who is continually beset by his wife and her liberal intellectual friends: they take up fashionably radical ideas almost, it seems, just to show him up as a bore. Members of this devilish clique have insinuated themselves into the higher social circles and, Rasputin-like, have bewitched the governor's wife and high society in general, all the while plotting and scheming behind the scenes. The governor is subtly provoked into cracking down on rebellious workers, the rabble rises up in the midst of a bizarre fete given by the governor's vacuous wife, and the town is burned to the ground. The scene from which Bush's fiery call to arms is taken finds the narrator discovering the governor in the midst of this chaotic scene, gesticulating and shouting at a building consumed by the blaze:

'It's all incendiarism! It's nihilism! If anything is burning, it's nihilism!' I heard almost with horror; and though there was nothing to be surprised at, yet actual madness, when one sees it, always gives one a shock.

Ignoring the pleas of his subordinates to get to safety, the half-mad governor continues on with his soliloquy:

'They will wipe away the tears of the people whose houses have been burnt, but they will burn down the town. It's all the work of four scoundrels, four and a half! Arrest the scoundrel! He worms himself into the honor of families. ...It's vile, vile!' Suddenly noticing a fireman at the top of the burning lodge, he asks: 'What is he doing there?'

'He is putting the fire out, your Excellency.'

'Not likely. The fire is in the minds of men and not in the roofs of houses. Pull him down and give it up! Better give it up, much better! Let it put itself out.'

The fire does not break out as a result of spontaneous combustion, as Barone seems to imply: it is deliberately set by disgruntled workers acting under the influence of a nihilistic cabal. This is meant to dramatize Dostoyevsky's view of the Russian revolutionaries of his time, whom he saw as possessed by a desire to destroy and little else.

In any case, the borrowed imagery is far from obscure. *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* is the title of a classic study of 19th-century radicalism by James H. Billington, now the Librarian of Congress. Certainly none of this was unknown to the men who shaped this speech—not counting the man who delivered it. The *Los Angeles Times* reported:

White House political aide Karl Rove and chief speechwriter Michael Gerson held a two-hour seminar with a panel of foreign policy scholars, including several leading neocons—newspaper columnist Charles Krauthammer, Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins University and Victor Davis Hanson of Stanford's Hoover Institution—according to a person who was present.

The *Washington Post* reported that Bill Kristol also coached Bush on the speech.

These four neoconservative ideologues, presided over by Rove, are the 21st-century equivalent of Dostoyevsky's revolutionary devils—and, what's more, they seem to know it. As Dostoyevsky put it: "It's all the work of four scoundrels, four and a half!" A prophetic sentence, that.

Bush's peroration was suffused with fire, it burned with the steely-eyed fanaticism of the ideologues who forged it, full of phrases that soared so far above the real world that a good many listeners had trouble believing their ears. Does the president seriously believe "the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands"? Surely he didn't really mean to explain away the exponential expansion of big government in America as due to the lack of civil liberties in, say, the former Soviet Union or the oppression of women in Saudi Arabia? The war-weary wondered, at home and abroad, as they listened to the most powerful man on earth enunciate his militant doctrine: what new conflict will erupt as a result of a crusade to accelerate "the expansion of freedom in all the world"? What else could be the meaning of a pledge "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in

every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world"?

In a vain attempt to reassure the panicked, Bush senior made a rare intervention. "People want to read a lot into it," he said, "that this means new aggression or newly assertive military forces. That's not what that speech is about. It's about freedom."

In other words, it's all talk and no action. But there is already plenty of action going on in Iraq and good reason to expect more. Rumors of war with Iran are persistent and credible. Seymour Hersh, whose record has been pretty good so far, reports that U.S. operatives are already penetrating Iranian territory in search of Tehran's elusive nukes. And in Eastern Europe, on the far frontier of what used to be the heartland of the old Russian empire, a Western-financed "orange revolution" is engineered by a coalition of the U.S. and an expansionist European super-state, while NATO edges closer to the gates of Moscow.

In Dostoyevsky's day, urban radicals influenced by Marx and emboldened by Bakunin went out into the countryside proclaiming the doctrines of socialism and syndicalist anarchism, to little effect. They committed sporadic acts of spectacular violence and functioned roughly. Such groups as the *Narodnaya Volya* (Peoples' Will), whose militants assassinated two Russian czars, were 19th-century versions of al-Qaeda. Dostoyevsky's novel is a dark chronicle of the psychology that energized their terroristic brand of nihilism.

The "fire in the minds of men" eventually engulfed all Russia; *The Possessed* bitterly foreshadowed the red inferno of the 1917 revolution. That a phrase torn from its entrails should augur a new worldwide revolutionary movement seems almost like payback for the author's notoriously "reactionary"

views. Yet it does seem as if the new militants are following in the footsteps of Dostoyevsky's original models, venturing out from the Western metropolis into the countryside of the world, bent on "liberating" poor oppressed peasants who languish in premodernity. That they would meet with the same overt hostility that greeted the Narodniks of yesteryear was all too predictable. As Russell Kirk warned in a 1990 speech:

A politicized American army operating abroad would be no more popular ... than the Red Army has been. An imposed or induced abstract democracy thrust upon peoples unprepared for it would produce at first anarchy, and then—as in nearly all of 'emergent' Africa, over the past four decades—rule by force and a master.

The neocons, who revile Kirk's memory on account of this scolding, threw their hats in the air as Bush embraced their core agenda. "This is real neoconservatism," Robert Kagan exulted to the *Los Angeles Times*. "It would be hard to express it more clearly. If people were expecting Bush to rein in his ambitions and enthusiasms after the first term, they are discovering that they were wrong."

Others were not so ebullient. "If Bush means it literally, then it means we have an extremist in the White House," said Nixon Center president Dimitri Simes. "I hope and pray that he didn't mean it ... [and] that it was merely an inspirational speech, not practical guidance for the conduct of foreign policy."

William F. Buckley Jr. pronounced the speech "confusing." Aside from being "an improvisation," it was also embarrassingly ungrammatical: "Mr. Bush said that 'whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny.' You can simmer in resentment, but not in tyranny." The speech was, in Buckley's



view, bad policy as well as execrable grammar: "What about China? Is it U.S. policy to importune Chinese dissidents 'to start on this journey of progress and justice'? How will we manifest our readiness to 'walk at [their] side?'"

If the National Endowment for Democracy isn't already on the job, the president's recent pronouncements are bound to direct their efforts in China's direction. Professor Claes Ryn saw where all this was leading, and he put it quite well in his 2004 address to the Philadelphia Society:

The notion that America knows better than all other nations and has a right to dictate terms to them betrays a monumental conceit. It also guarantees that other nations will see a need to arm themselves just to have some protection against American bullying. ... China, which has long found Western hegemony intolerable and is already strongly prone to nationalism, can be expected to respond to American assertiveness by greatly expanding its military power. If present trends continue, the time should soon be ripe—in 50 years perhaps?—for a horrendous Sino-American confrontation.

Nothing is "too massive a challenge to our liberationist policy" that it dwarfs the monumental edifice of the liberationists' conceit. Yes, but "what about Saudi Arabia?" asks Buckley. "Will we refuse to buy Saudi oil?" I would think that the real objective is to seize it.

Peggy Noonan found the speech "startling," and confessed it left her "with a bad feeling, and reluctant dislike" evoked by such grandiose phrases as "we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom." This, she averred "is the kind of sentence that makes you wonder if this White House did not... have a case of

what I have called in the past 'mission inebriation.' A sense that there are few legitimate boundaries to the desires born in the goodness of their good hearts."

Drunk with power, flush with Pyrrhic victories, and convinced that they are on the right side of history, the "mission inebriation" that bedevils this administration is Ms. Noonan's polite way of describing megalomania. The defining characteristic of what Ryn calls the "imperialistic personality" is a monumental conceit: it is the same will to dominate that drove the Jacobins, the

Bolsheviks, and the 19th-century followers of the nihilist Sergei Nechaev, upon whom the author of *The Possessed* modeled his characters. That American policymakers will likely end up like Dostoyevsky's revolutionary conspirators—increasingly committed to state terrorism in pursuit of some utopian vision—seems horribly and tragically inevitable. ■

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[eve of destruction]

# Wilson's Ghost

Spreading freedom around the world  
will destroy democracy at home.

**By Christopher Layne**

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH'S reelection brought considerable speculation about what foreign-policy tack he would take during his second term. Many hoped that the administration would moderate its bellicose unilateralism and seek to repair relations with traditional allies. But during inauguration week, hopes that the Bush team would chart a more temperate foreign-policy course were dealt a one-two knockout punch by Condoleezza Rice's confirmation testimony and President Bush's inaugural address.

Although it remains to be seen how the administration will implement its foreign-policy vision, Bush and Rice outlined its intellectual assumptions. In her

prepared remarks to the Senate, Rice said that—for both moral and practical reasons—the administration would seek to "create a balance of power in the world that favors freedom." Moreover, Rice asserted, exporting American values abroad serves the national interest because—or so she claimed—"one of history's clearest lessons is that America is safer, and the world more secure, whenever and wherever freedom prevails."

Rice's remarks presaged President Bush's inaugural speech two days later in which he claimed that "tyranny" abroad is the main cause of U.S. insecurity. In the most memorable and controversial passage of his address, Bush

declared, “We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one.”

In claiming that the survival of democracy in America depends on the successful export of democracy abroad, Bush has reprised Wilsonianism’s most dubious thesis. Since the U.S. emerged as a great power in the early 20th century, it is fair to say that American policymakers have never truly believed that America’s territorial integrity or its regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere have been seriously challenged. Rather, the threat that they have apprehended is much more nebulous and ideological in nature. Wilsonianism is based on a de-territorialized conception of the national interest as the defense of “core values.”

Core values are America’s domestic political and economic institutions or what colloquially can be called the

unless the United States can remake the world in its own ideological image, it will be transformed at home into a garrison state. That is, unless American liberal ideology is pre-eminent globally, the United States might have to accept curtailed political liberties and economic regimentation at home in order to ensure its security in an ideologically hostile world. This is why American foreign policy rests on the assumption that political and economic liberalism cannot flourish at home unless they are safe abroad.

The Wilsonian worldview is the outgrowth of a fundamental pathology in American liberalism. (In America, the Left and the Right both subscribe to the tenets of classical liberalism that stress the protection of individual liberty against state power, property rights, and due process of law.) As Louis Hartz pointed out in his classic book, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, in domestic politics liberalism has been deeply hostile to alternative ideologies and preemptively sought to suppress them. American liberalism can be secure at

America’s crusader mentality springs from liberalism’s intolerance of competing ideologies and the concomitant belief that—merely by existing—“non-democratic” states (including those, like Iran, that are democratic, albeit not liberal democracies) threaten America’s security and the safety of liberalism at home. Regime change had been a favored tool of American foreign policy long before Saddam Hussein came down the pike: if nondemocratic states were troublemakers, the obvious solution was for the U.S. to flex its muscles and transform them into democracies.

Here grand strategy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because it causes states that otherwise might not be actively hostile to become threats. That is, liberal imperialism causes the United States to be more, not less, insecure than it would be if its external ambitions were more modest.

When the U.S., by asserting the universal applicability of its own ideology, challenges the legitimacy of other regimes—by labeling them as outposts of tyranny or members of an axis of evil—the effect is to increase those states’ sense of isolation and vulnerability. With good reason, such states fear that their survival could be at risk. Iran is a good example. Given that states and regimes are highly motivated to survive, it’s no surprise that others respond to American policy by adopting strategies that give them a chance to do so. Simply put, states like Iran will respond self-defensively to their perceptions of an American threat to their security by acquiring WMD capabilities and supporting terrorism.

One thing is certain: because of liberal ideology—which, to repeat, is the essence of Bush’s vision—American foreign policy sets us up for confrontation and antagonism with others. In the Islamic world, for example, the United States is not hated because of what it

## **AMERICA’S CRUSADER MENTALITY SPRINGS DIRECTLY FROM LIBERALISM’S INTOLERANCE OF COMPETING IDEOLOGIES AND THE CONCOMITANT BELIEF THAT—MERELY BY EXISTING—“NONDEMOCRATIC” STATES THREATEN AMERICA’S SECURITY.**

American way of life. What U.S. policymakers have feared for the last century is the closure of other regions of the world to the penetration of America’s democratic ideology. As the diplomatic historian Frank Ninkovich has put it, U.S. foreign-policy elites have worried that closure of these regions would “cut off the oxygen without which American society, and liberal institutions generally, would asphyxiate.” Wilsonianism always has been based on the fear that

home only when it has no rivals. Not to put too fine a point on it, American liberalism—supposedly an ideology of tolerance—aims to extirpate other ideologies and worldviews. Wilsonianism seeks to replicate externally American liberalism’s domestic primacy. In other words, American liberalism is the fountainhead of American imperialism and is therefore both the hegemonic ideology at home and the ideology of hegemony abroad.

stands for but rather because of what it does. Others resent Washington's policies in the region and even more that the U.S. is in their faces, using its power to force American ideology, culture, and values on them. It's hardly a surprise that American policy generates resistance: it is the fate of all dominant imperial powers to engender fear, resentment, and opposition. Here there is no American exceptionalism.

Wilsonianism views the world as sharply divided between good states and bad—or even “evil”—states. Thus the policy implications are obvious: if bad states are the source of war and terrorism, the prescription is for the United States to use its power to transform them into good states. In this respect, Wilsonianism reveals the dark side of American liberal ideology: permanent (or semi-permanent) war and the transformation of the United States into a garrison state or, as it came to be known during the Cold War, a national-security state. Contrary to Bush's assertion in his inaugural address, an interventionist—indeed, imperial—foreign policy geared to democracy promotion is antithetical to the flourishing of democracy and liberty here at home.

The claim that the fate of democracy in America hinges on a policy of exporting it abroad is curious indeed. One wonders whether Bush was aware of the jarring disconnect between his words—“the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands”—and the pictures of Washington, D.C. during the run-up to the inauguration. Like his predecessors, Bush believes that America can avoid becoming a garrison state only by following a policy of strategic internationalism and democracy promotion abroad. But Washington looked quite like a garrison state during inauguration week. Instead of the capital of a democratic state basking in freedom, it

resembled the militarily occupied capital of a banana republic in the midst of a coup. Just how robust is our domestic freedom when the War on Terror gives license to the government to whittle away at civil liberties?

This is not just a criticism of the Bush administration. The fact is that war inevitably leads to an expansion of state power and a consequent diminution of

**TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AN IMPERIAL POLICY ABROAD—AND THEIR GRIP ON POLITICAL POWER AT HOME—AMERICAN FOREIGN-POLICY ELITES HAVE ENGAGED IN A POLICY OF CALCULATED THREAT EXAGGERATION.**

liberty. This happened during World War I and its aftermath, during World War II, and during the Cold War. Those three conflicts led to the emergence of the national-security state and the imperial presidency—the effects of which on freedom and liberty at home have not been discernibly different from those attributed to the kind of garrison state that our leaders claim their ambitious overseas policies allow America to avoid becoming.

Bush's words about liberty and freedom ring hollow in another sense, too. American officials want to promote democracy abroad but are loathe to practice it in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The reasons that democracies like the United States are supposed to be peaceful is that citizens can hold accountable leaders who squander blood and treasure on unnecessary wars. Moreover, democracy is supposed to ensure that policymaking is transparent and policies are subject to open debate. That's the theory at any rate. But it's based on a romantic notion of how American democracy works that any sophisticated fourth-grader knows is illusory.

What this theory leaves out is what political scientists call “the state”—a nation's central decision makers and the institutional mechanisms through which they exercise power. The American approach to political theory—and what most Americans believe about the political process—emphasizes the role of civil society (that is, individuals and interest groups) and downplays the role of the

state. But even in countries like the United States, the state is an autonomous actor. That is, rather than by being constrained by civil society, the state mobilizes the levers of power to manipulate civil society and harness it to support state policies. For example, to maintain public support for an imperial policy abroad—and their grip on political power at home—American foreign-policy elites have engaged in a policy of calculated threat exaggeration to overcome the stubborn fact that, because of geography and its overwhelming power, the U.S. is basically immune to serious military threats from abroad. Consequently, for well over a century, official American rhetoric has been based on a finely honed set of images: dangerous ideologies, a shrinking world, and falling dominoes. To mobilize support for its policies, the American foreign-policy elite has created a rhetorical climate of fear in order to convince Americans that only strategic internationalism can preserve the nation's security and way of life.

Another way the state manipulates civil society is by controlling the flow of information and thus shaping public opinion. In the U.S. government, there



even is a name for this: “perception management,” a euphemism for sophisticated lying. It is the kind of manipulation of the truth that the Bush administration engaged in during the run-up to the Iraq War—the claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and the assertion that Saddam Hussein was linked to the 9/11 attacks. But perception management is a bipartisan tool. During the Kosovo War, the Clinton administration justified American intervention by implying that Serbia was engaged in, as then-Defense Secretary William Cohen said, “a horrific slaughter”—a genocide of Holocaust-like proportions against the Kosovars.

Eventually, the actual facts may come to light. They did with respect to this administration’s false claims about Iraq and with the Clinton administration’s wild exaggerations about Kosovo. But in the short term, perception management allows policymakers to stifle dissent, pre-empt congressional opposition, and gain a free hand to carry out their interventions. By the time the Congress, the

It’s quite evident that the Bush administration has a rather blinkered view of the democratic process. On the eve of his inauguration, Bush claimed that the 2004 election had legitimized his foreign policy. In a recent *New Yorker* article, Seymour Hersh observed, “Bush’s reelection is regarded within the Administration as evidence of America’s support for his decision to go to war,” and an endorsement of its ambitious foreign policy, including “its basic long range policy goal in the Middle East: the establishment of democracy throughout the region.” They believe that the American electorate has given the administration a second-term green light to go after “outposts of tyranny” like Iran, Syria, and North Korea. Just how an electoral victory procured through disinformation—and by equating disagreement with the administration’s foreign policy with a lack of patriotism—amounts to a mandate is an interesting proposition. Yet as Bush himself put it, last November was the administration’s “accountability moment.” This too is a curious view of

Bush administration is trying to restructure the national-security apparatus so that it can wage “low intensity wars” in secret. So much for the notion that in a democracy policy is supposed to be made openly so that its merits can be debated fully. And so much for the notion that policymakers are to be held accountable for their actions.

In articulating the underpinnings of his foreign-policy doctrine, Bush has aligned himself squarely with one of the two grand historical narratives about America’s role in the world—the one that says that to achieve greatness and security, the United States must remake the world in its image. But there is another grand narrative that is rooted just as deeply in America’s history and political culture: that if America seeks to remake the world, the world will end up remaking America, eroding the very liberties that lie at the core of the American ideal and rendering the United States far less secure than it would be if it cultivated freedom at home and minded its own business abroad. This narrative also holds that policies are not measured on the basis of the intentions underlying them but rather on the basis of the consequences they produce.

Far from constituting a higher realism, this is a test that American imperialism flunks because its actual consequence is weakening liberty at home rather than strengthening it. During the next four years—with Iraq in chaos and the looming specter of war with Iran and North Korea—we are likely to find ourselves engaged in another of America’s periodic great debates about foreign policy, a debate in which these two grand narratives once again will do battle. ■

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## THEY BELIEVE THAT THE **AMERICAN ELECTORATE** HAS GIVEN THE ADMINISTRATION A **SECOND-TERM GREEN LIGHT** TO GO AFTER “**OUTPOSTS OF TYRANNY**” LIKE IRAN.

public, and the media realize they were misled, it’s too late because the official policy has already been implemented and is irreversible. Indeed, some policymakers have been quite candid in urging the U.S. to formulate military strategies that will enable it to intervene and prevail quickly before congressional or public opposition can mobilize. In an interview with the *International Herald Tribune* on the eve of his retirement as NATO supreme commander, Wesley K. Clark urged precisely that the U.S. adopt strategies that could design around the constraining effects of the democratic process.

the American political process. In the United States, the accountability of officials is supposed to be ongoing, not momentary.

If the administration puts its current plans into effect, soon we may be denied even accountability moments in matters of war and peace. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *New Yorker* have all reported that the administration is moving to gut the Central Intelligence Agency and transfer key responsibilities for intelligence gathering and covert operations to the Pentagon, where these activities will be shielded from outside oversight and accountability. That is, the

# The Anti-Conservatives

Who convinced the president that our democracy depends on a worldwide crusade?

By Patrick J. Buchanan

THAT GEORGE W. BUSH would seek to embed the Iraq War in the higher cause of global democracy was to be expected. That is the way of wartime presidents.

By late 1863, Lincoln's war to crush Southern secession was about whether "government of the people, by the people, for the people shall ... perish from the earth." By 1917, the European war whose causes Wilson professed not to understand in 1916 had become "the war to end all wars" and to "make the world safe for democracy."

Leaders alchemize wars begun over lesser interests into epochal struggles for universal principles because only thus can they justify demands for greater sacrifices in blood and treasure. But Bush has gone Wilson one better. He is not only going to make the world safe for democracy, he is going to make the world democratic. Where Lincoln abolished slavery in the South, Bush is going to abolish tyranny from the earth: "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

A conservative knows not whether to laugh or weep, for Mr. Bush has just asserted a right to interfere in the internal affairs of every nation on earth. Why? Because the "survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands." But this is utterly ahistorical. The world has

always been afflicted with despots. Yet America has always been free. And we have remained free by following the counsel of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams and staying out of foreign quarrels and foreign wars.

Who is feeding the president this interventionist nonsense?

The president now plans to hector and badger foreign leaders on the progress each is making toward attaining U.S. standards of democracy. "We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and nation—the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right." This is a formula for "Bring-it-on!" collisions with every autocratic regime on earth, including virtually every African and Arab ruler, all the "outposts of tyranny" named by Secretary Rice, most of the nations of Central Asia, China, and Russia. This is a prescription for endless war. Yet as Madison warned, "No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

Who and what converted a president who came to office with no knowledge of the world to the idea that only a global crusade for democracy could keep us secure? Answer: 9/11—and the neoconservatives.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Bush calls 9/11 the day "when freedom came under attack." This is sophomoric. Osama did not send fanatics to ram planes into the World Trade Center because he hates the

Bill of Rights. He sent the terrorists here because he hates our presence and policies in the Middle East. He did it for the same reason FLN rebels blew up cafes in Paris and Hamas suicide bombers blow up pizza parlors in Jerusalem.

From the Battle of Algiers to the bombing of the Beirut Marine barracks, from the expulsion of the Red Army by the mujahideen of Afghanistan to the expulsion of Israel from Lebanon by Hezbollah, guerrilla war and terror tactics have been the means Muslims have used to expel armies they could not defeat in conventional war.

The 9/11 killers were over here because we are over there. We were not attacked because of who we are but because of what we do. It is not our principles they hate. It is our policies. U.S. intervention in the Middle East was the cause of the 9/11 terror. Bush believes it is the cure. Has he learned nothing from Iraq?

In 2003, we invaded a nation that had not attacked us, did not threaten us, and did not want war with us to disarm it of weapons it did not have. Now, after plunging \$200 billion and the lives of 1,400 of our best and bravest into this war and killing tens of thousands of Iraqis, we have reaped a harvest of hatred in the Arab world and, according to officials in our own government, have created a new nesting place and training ground for terrorists to replace the one we lately eradicated in Afghanistan.

Among those who have converted President Bush to the notion that with-

out Arab democracy there can be no Mideast peace is Natan Sharansky, and much of what the famed Soviet dissident writes is undeniably true. Even inside the darkest despotism, people yearn for freedom. They hate tyranny and love liberty. They wish to live in lands that allow them to choose their own leaders. And as democratic rulers must return to the people for renewal of their mandates in free elections, they are more likely to seek the peace and prosperity their people desire. Thus, only democracy can pave the way to true peace and security. This is the message of Sharansky's *Case for Democracy*, which the president has embraced and encouraged all to read.

But what is often true is not always true, and U.S. foreign policy, which is to protect U.S. vital interests and the peace and freedom of Americans, cannot be rooted in the idealism of an ex-Soviet dissident or the ideology of neoconservatives who promised us a "cakewalk" in Iraq and assured us we would be wel-

Libya for the massacre of Pan Am 103 if Khadafi would surrender his weapons of mass destruction. Khadafi did, and Bush rightly claims this as a diplomatic success of his first term.

While it is true that the dictatorships of Franco, Pinochet, and Marcos gave way to democracies, that was not true of Batista, Somoza, or the Shah. When Carter undermined the Peacock Throne, we got the Ayatollah.

Urging Bush not to press Israel into making peace with the Palestinians until Palestine embraces democracy is a clever way to postpone peace indefinitely and let Israel expand its settlements and consolidate its hold over the West Bank and East Jerusalem. That may be in Israel's interest. But it is not in America's interest. Sharansky's idealism just happens to coincide with Sharon's agenda. Can President Bush not see this?

America has old friendships and important interests in the Middle East that cannot await the dawn of democracy in the 22 Arab states where it cur-

are we that if the kings of Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia fall, democracies will arise?

Given that the neocons were wrong on every count about Iraq, does Bush truly wish to gamble the Middle East on their confident predictions that, once the Arab monarchies fall, Western democracy will flourish among people who seem to revile Bush and revere Osama bin Laden?

After the shocked reaction in many quarters to the president's inaugural address, the White House, George H.W. Bush, and later the president himself hastened to explain that there was nothing new or radical in the speech. Perhaps a sense of reality has already begun to manifest itself.

We are simply not going to stop buying Saudi oil or cut off our \$2 billion in annual aid to Egypt or sever relations with Musharraf or sanction a China that could sink the dollar because these regimes refuse to make the reforms Bush demands. It is not going to happen. President Bush will either wind up eating his overblown rhetoric or following it over the cliff and taking us with him.

America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy," said John Quincy Adams, "She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own." Under the tutelage of Jacobins who call themselves idealists, Bush has repudiated this wise core doctrine of U.S. foreign policy to embrace Wilsonian interventionism in the internal affairs of every autocratic regime on earth. We are going to democratize the world and abolish tyranny.

Giddy with excitement, the neocons are falling all over one another to hail the president. They are not conservatives at all. They are anti-conservatives, and their crusade for democracy will end as did Wilson's, in disillusionment for the president and tragedy for this country. ■

## THE NEOCONS WERE WRONG ON EVERY COUNT ABOUT IRAQ.

comed with flowers. Sharansky notwithstanding, democracy is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of America's peace and security, nor even of Israel's.

In 1967, David Ben-Gurion told Richard Nixon and this writer he hoped Nasser would survive Egypt's humiliation in the Six-Day War because only Nasser had the prestige to lead the Arabs to accept peace with Israel. Sadat was no democrat when Israel gave him back the Sinai and signed a peace. Arafat was no democrat when Rabin and Peres agreed to the Oslo Accords and shared a Nobel Prize with him. Assad was no democrat when Israel negotiated a truce with him on the Golan Heights. That truce has held. Nor was Khadafi a democrat when Bush agreed to lift sanctions imposed on

rently does not exist. We cannot make the best the enemy of the good. And if democracy means rule by the people, how enthusiastic should we be about its introduction into the Middle East? In 1991, Algerians were given a democratic vote—and elected an Islamist regime. The army intervened, igniting a civil war that left 100,000 dead. President Bush might ask his father why he did not speak up for Algerian democracy then.

Unlike Eastern Europe, where communism was imposed on Christian countries with traditions of self-rule, democracy never took root in the Arab lands of the caliphate. Thus King Farouk's ouster gave us Nasser. King Idris's ouster gave us Khadafi. And King Feisal's ouster gave us Saddam Hussein. How certain



# The Education of Larry Summers

Math is hard—for girls.

By Steve Sailer

I TRIED TO EXPLAIN the Larry Summers brouhaha to my wife, but she stumped me with a simple question. I had outlined for her how the president of Harvard—after mentioning that genetic differences could be one possible reason that more men than women are qualified to be Harvard professors of math, engineering, and science—had almost instantly offered three apologies and pledged more affirmative action for women as reparations.

Puzzled, my wife asked, “Why did Summers give in so fast and promise, in effect, to make it harder for our sons to someday get hired there? What’s the president of Harvard so scared of?”

Invented by Jesse Jackson, this public ritual—an authority figure commits a “gaffe” by telling a bit of truth about human diversity and then immediately hands over other people’s money and opportunities to the offended special interest—has become so familiar that nobody asks why the fix is always in.

Summers, who was Secretary of the Treasury under Bill Clinton, is a famously headstrong and arrogant man. So why did he cave in without a fight? It’s not as if he was lacking in responses.

MIT biologist Nancy Hopkins won much sympathy from the press for fleeing Summers’s talk like a blushing Victorian maiden hearing some uncouth personage use the word “legs” instead of “limbs.” In leaking Summers’s off-the-record talk to the *Boston Globe*, Hopkins claimed that she had to leave or, “I would’ve either blacked out or thrown up.”

In reality, Hopkins is a veteran at playing the gender card. Wendy McElroy reported in 2001 on Hopkins’s lucrative conflicts-of-interest:

The [MIT] Committee was established to investigate complaints of sex discrimination that were leveled by Hopkins herself. Yet she became the Chair, heading an investigation into her own complaints. As a result of her findings, Hopkins received—among other benefits—a 20 percent raise in salary, an endowed chair and increased research funds. Indeed, most of the Committee consisted of women who benefited substantially from the ‘guilty’ verdict. The only evidence of sex discrimination produced was the fact that there are more men than women in the faculty of the School for Science.

Similarly, Denice D. Denton was celebrated for standing up to Summers to, in her words, “speak truth to power.” This heroic tableau of the humble, no doubt discriminated against female engineering professor daring to defy the mighty male university president lost some luster when it emerged that Denton was UC Santa Cruz’s chancellor-designate at \$275,000 annually. One college supremo attempting to intimidate another one into not mentioning inconvenient facts is not what most people visualize as speaking truth to power.

A few days later, Tanya Schevitz reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on how Denton plays the game. The

headline read, “UC hires partner of chancellor: creates \$192,000 post for Santa Cruz chief’s lesbian lover.”

Less privileged women were unenthused. “It makes me sick,” said Mary Higgins, an administrative assistant at UCSF and statewide president of UC’s clerical union, which did not get a raise this year. “It is a violation of the public trust and it is just more of the same.”

But Denton had a powerful defender in the female scientist who had formerly headed UC Santa Cruz. M.R.C. Greenwood praised UCSC’s two-for-the-price-of-three deal for the lesbian academics as the cost of gender diversity: UCSC “should be commended for attracting and hiring two very qualified female engineers.” Greenwood herself had just moved up to provost of the UC system at \$380,000 per year, almost \$100,000 more than the man she replaced. Moreover, she quietly brought with her a female scientist friend from Santa Cruz to fill the novel post of “Executive Faculty Associate to the Provost.” Are you noticing a pattern here?

The feminists’ complaints never made intuitive sense. (Not that they cared; the goal of academic feminism is money and power, not rationality.) Apparently, the Patriarchy had conceded to power-sharing with women in such trivial outposts as law and business, but it desperately clung to that central bastion of male control of society: the college mathematics department.

All 23 tenured mathematicians at Harvard are indeed men. Yet can you name one? Do you know even two living

mathematicians? Those who feel the necessity of pursuing mathematics are an odd breed. A mathematician has almost zero chance for celebrity, yet his primary reward, if he discovers something important enough to have it named after him, is fame. It's a strange kind of renown, one that the vast majority of humanity will never notice. Among the handful who comprehend, however, his fame will be as undying as Achilles'.

The more meritocratic the field, the more feminists accuse it of discriminating against women. In mathematics, new proofs either quickly fail or are accepted forever. In contrast, women flourish most in notoriously faddish, cliquish domains like the humanities. In Harvard's English department, 20 out of 51 professors are women and at less exclusive colleges, they often comprise a majority.

One of Summers's initial triumphs had been hiring superstar cognitive scientist Steven Pinker, author of the anti-social-constructionist bestseller *The Blank Slate*, away from Hopkins's MIT. When asked by the *Harvard Crimson* if Summers's remarks were "within the pale of legitimate academic discourse," Pinker answered, "Good grief, shouldn't everything be within the pale of legitimate academic discourse, as long as it is presented with some degree of rigor? That's the difference between a university and a madrasa."

The first scientific challenge to academia's traditional assumption that men were smarter than women came in 1912 when pioneering IQ test researcher Cyril Burt announced they scored equally—on average. Yet as Summers noted, men are more variable, so they are more numerous among the extremely intelligent, such as Harvard professors and Nobel Prize winners (40 of whom have taught at Harvard).

The Nobel Prize lists show a striking pattern: the fuzzier the field, the better women do. Twelve women have won

the most political and least intellectually rigorous Nobel Prize, Peace (13 percent of all individual winners), and ten have been Literature laureates (10 percent). In Physiology & Medicine, there have been seven female laureates (4 percent). In Chemistry, three (2 percent), and in Physics, the most abstract of the Nobels, just two (1 percent).

What about mathematics, that most unworldly of subjects? The Fields Medal for mathematicians under age 40 is the equivalent of the Nobel. No women number among its 44 recipients.

But surely the trend line must be turning upwards as discrimination lessens? That's true in Physiology & Medicine, where women won only once before 1977 but six times (9 percent) since. Yet, by aggregating Physics and Chemistry, we can see the opposite pattern: five women ranked among their first 160 laureates, but over the last 40 years, not a single woman features among the latest 160 winners.

Overall, in the bad old days from 1901 through 1964, women won 2.5 percent of the hard science Nobels. Since then, women have fallen to only 2.3 percent of the laureates.

Why hasn't feminism fostered more female scientific geniuses? Perhaps feminism persuaded the top women that they could have it all—romance, children, and career—rather than just the lonely celibacy society once demanded from them, and they spread themselves too thin. Moreover, feminism encourages women to indulge in self-pity and resentment, which distract from earning a Nobel.

My wife asked, "So why hasn't the Nobel Foundation bowed to feminist pressure and started the usual crypto-quotas to make women feel better about themselves?"

"Because they don't have to?" I speculated. "After all, they're the Nobel Foundation."

"Exactly," she shot back. "And Larry Summers is the president of Harvard. So why can't he stand up to the feminists, too?"

That got me thinking about the Nobel for Economic Sciences, which Summers may win someday. Economics has become a math-crazed subject, which might explain why none of the 55 recipients has been a woman. But it's also highly politicized, although in the opposite direction from the Literature Prize, where being a Communist has been an asset. In contrast, 23 of the last 44 Economics laureates have been associated with the University of Chicago's temple of *laissez faire*.

While the entire female sex has yet to produce an Economics winner, Summers's uncles account for two: 1970 laureate Paul A. Samuelson is his father's brother and 1972 laureate Kenneth J. Arrow is his mother's brother. Both of Summers's parents were economists at Penn.

Having been blessed with the luckiest imaginable combination of genes and upbringing, nature and nurture, for an economics professor, Summers earned tenure at Harvard at age 28, then a record. This family history might help explain why Summers crumpled without a fight.

Summers's job is partly to enhance, but mostly to protect, one of the world's most valuable brand names. "Harvard" stands for "intelligence," extreme far-right edge of the IQ bell curve smarts. America is increasingly stratified by IQ, and the resulting class war that the clever are waging upon the clueless means that having Harvard's endorsement of your brainpower is ever more desirable. Thus, applications and SAT scores have skyrocketed over the last half-century.

Yet Harvard's IQ elitism sharply contradicts its professed egalitarianism. The typical Harvard professor or student

considers himself superior to ordinary folks for two conflicting reasons: first, he constantly proclaims his belief in human equality, while they don't; and second, he has a high IQ, while they don't. Further, he believes his brains weren't the luck of his genes. No, he earned them—which in turn means he feels that dumb people deserve to be dumb.

Ivy League presidents aren't much worried that the left half of the bell curve will get themselves well enough organized to challenge the hegemony of the IQ overclass. What they fear is opposition to their use of IQ sorting mechanisms, such as the politically incorrect but crucial SAT, from those identity politics pressure groups which perform below average in a pure meritocracy, such as women, blacks, and Hispanics. They each boast enough high-IQ activists, like Nancy Hopkins, to make trouble for prestigious universities.

So Harvard, like virtually all famous universities, buys off females and minorities with "a commitment to diversity"—in other words, quotas. By boosting less competent women, blacks, and Hispanics at the expense of the more marginal men, whites, and Asians, Harvard preserves most of its freedom to continue to discriminate ruthlessly on the basis of IQ.

What is obviously in the best interest of Harvard and of the IQ aristocracy in general, is for everybody just to shut up about group differences in intelligence. Stifling arguments allows the IQ upper class quietly to push its interests at the expense of everyone else. So Summers bought peace fast.

Of course, he won't pay the price. Our sons will. ■

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# Republican Race Card

Conservatives learn the liberal game.

By W. James Antle III

A BLACK ACTIVIST GROUP issued an angry press release: some senators were trying to block the nomination of an African-American woman to a senior government position, engaging in what the organization described as "blatant racism." The minister who serves as the group's president referred to the senators as a lynch mob and likened them to Bull Connor, the infamous Birmingham police commissioner who used attack dogs and fire hoses against civil-rights protestors in the 1960s.

Many statements similar in tone and content regularly circulate on the newswires, but there were several things that made this one unusual. The outraged group, a 501c3 outfit called the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny (BOND), and its leader, the Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, were conservative. The senators being criticized were all liberal Democrats. And the nominee in question was Condoleezza Rice, who in the end was confirmed by 85 to 13 in the Senate for the office of secretary of state in a Republican administration.

President Bush's frequently stated goal of creating a more inclusive GOP may have lasting effects on American racial politics. Although the party is still far from being truly competitive among minority voters, Bush has assembled a remarkably diverse cabinet and compiled an impressive list of historic firsts—the first black secretary of state, the first black woman secretary of state, and, at this writing, likely the first Hispanic attorney general. This has increasingly put liberals in the uncomfortable

position of criticizing minority Bush appointees and has prompted many conservatives to defend those nominees with equal vigor.

These conservatives often maintain that such appointees are treated particularly unfairly by the Left as punishment for wandering off the "liberal plantation." The contention is that liberals cannot accept that blacks, Hispanics, or Asian Americans could possibly be conservative Republicans. But critics counter that these arguments mirror the type of race-baiting once roundly condemned on the Right. *American Prospect* writer Sam Rosenfeld has labeled this tactic "the conservo-race card," which he described as "that unseemly knee-jerk imputation of racism and racial victimhood whenever a minority conservative is criticized."

Either way, during the Rice confirmation hearings the debate in some circles revolved around race as much as foreign policy. Reverend Peterson called the delay in her confirmation "a slap in the face to all black Americans." Many conservatives seized on Sen. Robert Byrd's (D-W. Va.) prominent role in extending the debate on Rice's nomination. Byrd was a recruiter for the Ku Klux Klan during the 1940s and remained a determined opponent of civil-rights legislation for decades afterward, though like the late Republican Strom Thurmond, he later disavowed his segregationist past.

"Whatever the reason," wrote columnist Mark Steyn in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "the sight of an old Klansman blocking a little colored girl from Birm-



ingham from getting into her office contributed to the general retro vibe that hangs around the Democratic Party these days." Roger L. Simon inveighed against Byrd on his blog, arguing, "the spectacle of this man criticizing anybody on their values is anathema to me" and "the spectacle of him lecturing a black woman is just sick." That the Democratic leadership allowed him to do so, said Simon, was "incomprehensible."

The *New York Post* also weighed in

praised Antonin Scalia's intelligence but called Clarence Thomas an "embarrassment," saying that a comparison of their dissents in one particular case was "like looking at an eighth-grade dissertation compared with somebody who just graduated from Harvard."

Reid did himself no favors with these comments. They came at a time when even some liberal legal scholars were beginning to write more favorably about Thomas's jurisprudence. Worse, in the

reversal from just a few years ago. Conservatives have long been accustomed to having their motives questioned when they objected to aspects of a minority nominee's record. Republican electoral gains, attributed to phenomena ranging from the Southern Strategy to Willie Horton, were often described as tainted by racism. The Clinton administration circulated a report by a liberal organization purporting to show that Senate Republicans were taking longer to confirm minority judicial nominees than white picks. John Ashcroft's opposition to Judge Ronnie White was frequently cited as evidence of racism.

By the 1990s, racism was being read into Republican positions with little obvious direct connection to race. Congressman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) famously said, "It's not 'spic' or 'nigger' anymore. They say, 'Let's cut taxes.'" The GOP congressional majority was frequently compared to the Ku Klux Klan—as if a major Klan agenda item was balancing the federal budget or lowering the capital gains tax.

In fact, some of the conservative accusations of Democratic racism appear to be expressly intended as retribution for this past. Fred Barnes told Brit Hume on Fox News, "If there were a black, woman Democrat who was nominated for a position and Republicans were doing the same things like this... the press would jump all over him and Democrats will be jumping all over him, calling them racist and so on." Jonah Goldberg, writing in his syndicated column, criticized Republicans for buying into "the racial logic of the Democrats for partisan gain," but tellingly concluded, "They started it." From talk radio to the Internet, conservative outlets buzzed with glee that the shoe was now on the other foot and Democrats were being criticized for opposing qualified blacks and Hispanics.

**JONAH GOLDBERG**, WRITING IN HIS SYNDICATED COLUMN, CRITICIZED REPUBLICANS FOR BUYING INTO **"THE RACIAL LOGIC OF THE DEMOCRATS FOR PARTISAN GAIN,"** BUT TELLINGLY CONCLUDED, **"THEY STARTED IT!"**

with an editorial: "They say a leopard can't change its spots. Can a one-time Klansman change his, umm, sheets?" *Newsmax* reported that the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an old civil-rights group whose leadership has moved right in recent years, also denounced Byrd's opposition to Rice. "It's not surprising," CORE spokesman Niger Innis is quoted as saying. "Byrd was a racist 50 years ago under the guise of leading the Dixiecrats and he's a non-reformed Dixiecrat today." BOND's Peterson declared, "I believe that Robert Byrd still represents the Klansmen in his heart."

Some conservatives would argue that Byrd is still representative of the Democratic Party. "The Democrats are reverting to their historic roots," says Mychal Massie, a national board member for the African-American conservative network Project 21. "They repressed minority advancement in the days of Bull Connor and are doing so today with Robert Byrd and Barbara Boxer through more high-tech means."

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) became a commonly cited example of Democratic racism after he

case the Democratic leader cited as his example, Scalia did not author a dissent. "Reid's comments were vile, vulgar, and racist," says Massie. Pundits were quick to pounce.

"In the end, you've got to ask yourself, why Scalia, good, Thomas, bad in the eyes of a man like Reid," opined Charles Krauthammer on Fox News. "I say it's the liberal plantation mentality, in which if you're a man on the right and white, it's OK. If you are the man on the right and you're African American, it's not." "Look, Justice Thomas is African American and he's conservative," said Clifford May on CNN. Sean Hannity commented, "I'm just beginning to see a pattern here... What I see is Democrats oppose African Americans that are conservative, but yet they claim to support minority rights."

Even some Republican politicians are starting to get into the act. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) warned his colleagues at a Judiciary Committee hearing on Alberto Gonzales, "Every Hispanic in America is watching how this man is being treated."

This is a stunning partisan role

"I'm sure [conservatives] are enjoying it," says Angela Dillard, professor of history at New York University and author of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner: Multicultural Conservatism in America*. "It's always thrilling to be able to adapt the language and symbolism of the opposition for your own use."

There is just one problem with the new tactic: no senator opposing Rice, Gonzales, Miguel Estrada, or any of the other minority Bush nominees has mentioned their race, not even Byrd. Even their most implacable foes praise their biographies and qualifications. Their objections are based on portions of their public records.

Rice played a major role in making the case for the Iraq War based on flawed intelligence. Gonzales's legal advice to the president and involvement in the White House torture memos are also legitimate issues with no racial dimension. Indeed, there are many other areas, ranging from abortion rulings on the Texas Supreme Court to immigration law enforcement comments at his confirmation hearings, where Gonzales could reasonably be criticized by the Right.

"I'm not prepared to make the argument that opposition to Rice or Gonzales is necessarily motivated by race," explains Massie. "But to call Rice incompetent or a liar over the WMD claims is laughable. The British, French, UN, and Clinton administration all believed the weapons were there... nobody called the white Clinton administration incompetent."

Goldberg argued in his syndicated column that if conservative Republicans are being hypocritical, then liberal Democrats are equally so, as they are the party that supports racial preferences. "Yes, Republicans are being hypocritical," he wrote, "but they aren't putting their hypocrisy into law."

"I think this shows the contradictions in the Right's position on race," says Dil-

lard. "They claim they want to remove race from the public sphere, but they are learning that these identities are useful in motivating people." For example, black and Hispanic conservatives provide "needed cover" in the debate over racial preferences. "Nobody wants to be called a racist," she continues. "So having an African-American oppose affirmative action is enormously helpful."

Conservatives of color have some legitimate grievances. Their racial and cultural authenticity is often attacked, especially by fellow blacks and Hispanics. During the certification of the 2004 Electoral College vote, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) said she was ashamed that Ohio's Republican secretary of state was black. "Being Hispanic for us means much more than having a surname," said New Jersey Congressman Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) of Miguel Estrada. When Armstrong Williams's \$240,000 contract with the Bush department of education was revealed, nationally syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin, the daughter of Filipino immigrants, posted on her website ugly, hate-filled e-mails she received as an example of the price paid by other nonliberal minorities. Otherwise politically correct editorial cartoonists and talk-show hosts don't hesitate to caricature Condoleezza Rice or call her "Aunt Jemima."

But this does not justify ruling whole lines of criticism of minority nominees out of bounds. Conservatives "have come up with some great rhetorical tactics on these issues," says Dillard, "but it would be sad if allegations of racism kept us from having real debates on people's records." In other contexts, it might be called the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Republicans have worked hard to exhibit a more color-blind image than the party of Willie Horton. It remains to be seen whether they can get there as the party of Johnnie Cochran. ■

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# Flooding Long Island

Aliens invade the Hamptons.

By Richard Cummings

JUAN RENDON and his mother, Beatrice, both from Ecuador, are part of the endless stream of illegal immigrants pouring into Long Island. According to police detective Matt Sullivan, one night Juan, drunk and bitter over a break-up with his girlfriend, stormed into her home in Brentwood and beat her. Dragging her into her car, he forced her to drive him to his mother's house, where the assault continued. *Newsday* reported that Juan's mother gagged the victim with her hand while her son battered the girl. He then forced her back into the car, and they drove to a Bay Shore industrial park where he raped her.

Juan Rendon was charged with five crimes, his mother with two. But theirs was not one violent, isolated act. It was the realization of a new fear stalking Suffolk County as tides of unassimilated immigrants overwhelm the community.

In the late 1990s, 1,500 Mexican day laborers—virtually all of them undocumented—descended on Farmingville, a village of 15,000 located in the middle of Suffolk County. Overnight, this tranquil hamlet was confronted with large crowds standing on corners, waiting to be approached by prospective employers offering \$7 an hour to do landscaping and construction work. For shelter, the workers packed into small ranch houses—often as many as 40 of them to a house—paying rent to unscrupulous landlords who knowingly violated local zoning codes.

Most kept their heads down and worked hard, but those with no stake in the life of a community more easily turn against it. As immigration has increased,

so too has the rate of violent crime, and many of the perpetrators, unlike Juan Rendon, elude local authorities by blending back into faceless crowds of aliens. One illegal Hispanic day laborer, driving drunk, rammed the car of a pregnant Farmingville woman, killing her. He jumped bail and escaped, never to be found.

As residents organized to protest the refusal of local, state, and federal authorities to address concerns about their changing town, Farmingville became the lightning rod of the Long Island immigration debate. But a proposal to have the county sue the INS was voted down by the Suffolk County legislature. The presiding officer at the time, Paul J. Tonna, a Republican who still represents Farmingville and whose position reflected a consensus of the legislature, insisted that the day workers constituted a "slave labor force" that was necessary to sustain economic growth. Unable to find work at home, the day laborers would work under any conditions to make money to send home to their impoverished families, and the legislators argued that cheap labor without benefits more than offset the loss of taxes that the workers might have otherwise paid. Meanwhile, local residents, whose property taxes exceeded \$6,000 per year for modest homes, saw their property values begin to plummet.

As tensions mounted, two Mexicans were lured to a basement under the guise of a job offer by several men, who stabbed and beat them. The perpetrators were convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 25 years in

prison. In response to the violence, several county legislators came up with a plan to build a hiring hall, so the workers would not congregate on street corners, where, local residents insisted, they made it impossible for children to go outside by themselves.

Various activists began to stream onto Long Island, from the Federation for American Immigration Reform and other immigration-restriction groups to La Raza and other open-borders contingents. When the legislature voted to build the facility, locals and their outside supporters rallied, forcing the county executive to veto the bill. The rationale was that a hiring hall for those here illegally compounded the crime and would serve as a magnet for more laborers to come to Long Island.

Pro-immigration lobbyists countered—and continue to argue—that their opponents are racists. They point out that Long Island has always welcomed immigrants, from the first Anglo-Saxon farmers to the Germans, Irish, Italians, and Jews who fled the crowded neighborhoods in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the Lower East Side, transforming a bucolic environment of farms and open space, where farmers and fisherman flourished, into a vast suburban sprawl that developed thanks to the network of highways built by Robert Moses. Robert Caro, in his monumental biography of Moses, *The Power Broker*, makes it clear that Moses envisioned Long Island as a paradise for the working classes of European stock, where they could live the American dream of having a home and a car.



During the 1970s, when environmentalists organized to promote a county farmland preservation program, Democratic members of the Suffolk legislature opposed it on the grounds that farms brought with them migrant farm workers, whose presence was considered alien to the middle-class paradise Long Island was supposed to be. Mostly poor blacks, the farm workers were recruited by gang leaders and transported to Long Island by farmers, who provided them with primitive housing and no benefits. Excluded from national labor legislation, they were unable to organize unions unless state law authorized it, and to date only California has done so, as the result of Cesar Chavez's grape pickers and the legacy of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. They could be seen, huddling on street corners, drinking Thunderbird out of bottles concealed in paper bags, thus offending the aesthetic of the upwardly mobile whites.

Gradually, the black farm workers dwindled and were replaced by undocumented workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries. As the farms began to disappear, the immigrants remained and found work in landscaping, which was more lucrative. Word spread, and the hordes arrived. In the wealthy Hamptons, they catered to the wealthy summer residents as housekeepers, maids, and cooks. Fancy restaurants staffed their kitchens with them, no one bothering to ask if any had green cards. Complicit in the growing immigration crisis, employers adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy that fueled further immigration.

No one seemed to notice just how many Hispanics were living in the Hamptons until their children began to turn up at the schools, causing the Springs residents in East Hampton to go into shock when they saw their real-estate taxes soar. English as a second language became a standard feature

across the East End of Long Island as some of the Hispanics began to assimilate, starting landscaping businesses of their own and hiring undocumented workers.

Hostility grew, and Southampton residents began protesting the crowds of disheveled workers loitering around the 7-Eleven, turning a town that had been one of the nation's most famous watering holes for the rich and famous into another Farmingville. When a Hispanic worker stabbed to death his elderly female employer, there were cries of outrage. In East Hampton, a wealthy white resident declared at a town board meeting that the Hispanic workers were "genetically incapable of assimilating."

Enter Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, a dynamic conservative Democrat whose tireless work habits have won him comparisons to the Energizer bunny. With his slim moustache and dark, wiry good looks, he might be Giancarlo Gianini in Lina Wertmuller's "Seven Beauties." Sometimes sartorially challenged, his entire focus is on politics and government, having moved from the Suffolk County legislature to the New York State Assembly and then to the county executive position, which he won in a heated

related in the minds of an increasing number of Long Islanders, Levy has singled out the criminal justice system to address the problem of noncompliance with the immigration laws. Until he acted, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) had only a token presence in Suffolk County, with a small office in Bohemia to check on possible customs problems at McArthur Airport.

Levy moved to have the ICE facility upgraded so that it would be prompted to do more about illegal immigration. Instead of suing the federal government to enforce its immigration laws, as had been proposed prior to Levy's election and voted down by the county legislature, he initiated a strategy aimed at providing the courts with information about immigration status before a court would set bail. He petitioned ICE under a 1996 statute to have the Bohemia facility upgraded with more resources or, in the alternative, to have ICE deputize eight probation and correction officers.

What Levy envisioned was for his deputies to interview people arrested for serious crimes to determine if they were illegals because, as Chief Deputy County Executive Paul Sabatino II explains, initial computer searches will only show a

## NO ONE SEEMED TO NOTICE JUST HOW MANY **HISPANICS** WERE LIVING IN THE **HAMPTONS** UNTIL THEIR **CHILDREN** BEGAN TO TURN UP AT THE **SCHOOLS**.

campaign. Levy is a smart politician who understands the sentiments of his constituency. He is so popular that left-wing pro-immigrationists don't dare to challenge him seriously, while conservatives are more than willing to overlook his party affiliation.

Because Levy is a county official and has no authority over immigration policy, he has sought new and imaginative ways of obliging the feds to do their job. With crime and immigration closely

hit if the person is already in the system for having an expired green card or for getting married or if an arrest warrant has been issued for him. Sabatino estimates that since 90 percent of undocumented aliens don't fall into these categories, there is an urgent need to conduct in-depth interviews with suspected illegals accused of committing crimes. Without the co-operation of the federal government, cross-referencing is virtually impossible.

In response to the petition, ICE now provides a 24-hour contact person to conduct the interviews. If the accused is found to be an illegal, bail will be set accordingly or denied, and if he is convicted, he will be deported after serving his sentence. Thanks to the new co-operation agreement with Suffolk County, ICE determined that both Juan and Beatrice Rendon, who were charged with kidnapping, assault, and rape, were illegals. Juan, it turned out, had a history of prior convictions and was wanted on several other charges.

But defenders of illegals reacted with both outrage and hysteria to this modest and legitimate reform. Levy was wrongly accused of proposing to deputize the entire Suffolk County police force so it could conduct sweeps of day workers so they could be deported, even if they had not been accused of a crime. And illegal immigration advocate Rev. Allan Ramirez derided Levy's efforts. "Mr. Levy is simply using this to create the impression that within the Latino immigrant community, there is a crime wave," he told *Newsday*. "This reflects more on the incompetence of a department that should have been doing this all along."

Sabatino points to the fact that because of the information provided to the court by virtue of the co-operative agreement, the judge set bail appropriately in the Rendon case. When the Rendons were arraigned in First District Court in Islip, the court ordered Mr. Rendon held in lieu of \$250,000 cash or \$500,000 bond and his mother held in lieu of \$100,000 cash or \$200,000 bond. Sabatino also confirms that there will be a meeting with ICE in the near future to discuss the deputization of the eight county probation and correction officers to enhance this co-operation further.

Sabatino asserts that by dealing with the criminal issue as it pertains to immigration, Levy can diffuse tensions on other issues. Sabatino points as well to

Levy's determination to crack down on employers, hoping in this way to rid the county of the plague that has descended on it. Perhaps even a compromise on hiring halls might be possible, with ICE representatives screening the workers and county personnel screening the employers.

Meanwhile, in neighboring Nassau County, municipalities such as Hempstead have begun to crack down on private homes packed with illegal immigrants. But Nadia Marin-Molina of the Workplace Project that promotes what she calls "the rights of the illegals" to this sort of housing because it is all they can afford, claims "It's absolutely ridiculous." The immigrant advocates believe the crackdown on illegal housing to be catastrophic for "blue-collar families" who have no choice but to pack into what are otherwise single-family homes.

This sense of entitlement on the part of illegal aliens and their advocates can be traced to Justice William Brennan's decision in *Plyer v. Doe*, in which the Supreme Court held unconstitutional a Texas law that denied state funds to school districts that enrolled children who were not legally admitted to the U.S. Brennan declared that although the undocumented aliens in question were, "by definition," as Lawrence Tribe puts it in his *Treatise on Constitutional Law*, in the country unlawfully, they were nevertheless "persons" under the 14th amendment and thereby entitled to equal protection even though they were not what the Court has characterized as a "suspect class" justifying a higher level of scrutiny. Brennan acknowledged that this higher level of scrutiny was not possible because their membership in the statutory classification under the Texas law was the result of a "wholly voluntary—indeed—criminal act." But because the children were not the same as their parents, who were also illegal aliens, because they were brought to the United States involuntarily

by their parents, there was no justification for discriminating against them. Brennan then challenged Texas by holding that its education law would have to further a "substantial" state interest to be upheld, as if defending one's borders were an insufficient interest.

This 1982 decision has been responsible for a mindset in America about illegal immigrants: if a state can't deny the children of illegals a public education, how can one justify deporting their parents, since, *a fortiori*, they are entitled to a decent family life—a right to work and a right to housing and so on. And if this is the case, aren't these children entitled to the same rights even if they happen to live in Mexico? If that is so, their fathers have a right to be on Long Island so they can work in order to send money home.

Predictably, advocates for the illegals on Long Island tar any opposition to the *Plyer v. Doe* mentality as racist, and Paul J. Tonna, perhaps positioning himself for a run against Steve Levy for county executive, says Levy has created "a climate of fear in the Latino community." But Tonna might consider that when Emma Lazarus wrote, in her homage to the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free" she didn't mean day workers who come here illegally and send what they earn back to Mexico.

Yet rain or shine, still they stand opposite the railway station in East Hampton, staring grimly at the cars, waiting for an SUV to drive up to take them to a building site. Each day, their numbers increase. They blend into an amorphous mass of humanity, "bowed by the weight of centuries." ■

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# Losing Their Religion

Neoconservatives lay claim to the Puritans

By Paul Gottfried

THERE IS A VIEW of the American past that a reader of any of the several neo-conservative house organs recognizes at once. One of my former graduate students and I quiz each other about how the editors of these journals might describe specific figures and events. Factual accuracy is irrelevant. What counts is how neoconservatives, given their selective memories and stereotypes, might interpret historical phenomena. One answers correctly by relating not what really happened but what the neo-conservatives present as a meaningful past. They do not allow disconfirming facts to alter this construction.

It was therefore not surprising when last month *Commentary* ran an essay, "Americanism and its Enemies," recapitulating familiar half-truths. The essay concerns the evolution of "Puritanism" as "Americanism" and identifies the exemplars and opponents of this American and predominantly Protestant civic religion. David Gelernter, the Yale professor of computer science who prepared this tribute, does not offer a shred of independent thought that might distinguish his argument about the progress and permutations of "the American religion" from the neoconservative party line. Gelernter quotes religious historians Perry Miller and Sidney Ahlstrom (my dissertation advisor) to lend support to his contentions, but he draws on sources in such a way that Miller and Ahlstrom would not always recognize their ideas or intentions. What is amply recognizable, on the other hand, are the ideological roots of Gelernter's take on American history.

A statement of at least part of the historical vision of neoconservatism is offered in Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*, in which "the American project" is defined as "the triumphant and majestic march of equality." Bloom writes, "When we Americans speak seriously about politics, we mean that our principles of freedom and equality and the rights based on them are everywhere applicable." Although Bloom, Charles Krauthammer, Ben Wattenberg, and Bill Kristol have favored a secular American crusade, other neoconservatives make periodic attempts to ground the effort in a distinctly religious outlook. Such an approach was evident when Michael Novak began preaching about "democracy as a divine mission." In a Christmas 1988 syndicated column, Novak compared global democracy to the Incarnation of Christ, explaining, "citizens of the world demand the birth of democracy in history, in physical institutions: as physical as the birth in Bethlehem."

But such comparisons reeked of blasphemy and Novak, a self-advertised Catholic theologian, eventually put them away. A more palatable neocon theology has been an appeal to Hebraic-sounding ideals to buttress an interventionist foreign policy. This tactic has well-noted precedents; Richard Gamble's *War for Righteousness*, which looks at the millenarian rhetoric accompanying Woodrow Wilson's holy war for democracy, is particularly instructive here. Gamble documents the long-established American cultural receptiveness to democratic crusading clothed in biblical passages

and postmillenarian images. In the early 20th century, idealistic Americans believed that it was their duty to perfect the world politically in preparation for Christ's return. In the neoconservative reformulation, this rhetoric assumes an Old Testament resonance and stresses how the ascribed religious heritage matches the beliefs of Jewish immigrants and their descendants.

From this perspective, an assumed Puritan pedigree for neoconservatives may be seen as inevitable. George Will in *Statecraft as Soulcraft* had already highlighted the Puritans as a progressive religious force trying to overcome human deficiencies: their "overreaching as moralists" was "the most admirable and most American of the American excesses." That problematic virtue, which Will finds in the Puritans, has been customarily associated with the neoconservatives. In an isolated, qualified criticism, John Ehrman in *The Rise of Neoconservatism* notices his subjects' "overzealousness." Neoconservatives "frequently viewed their enemies as embodiments of evil who must be destroyed rather than as opponents who must be debated with and persuaded."

In a series of historical essays, moreover, Gertrude Himmelfarb has since the '80s celebrated the identifiably Protestant virtues of hard work and honesty in early 19th-century England. In a 1989 article for *Commentary* entitled "Victorian Values, Jewish Values," Himmelfarb attributes the same virtues to Eastern European Jews who immigrated to England and the United States.

What is true are the following facts: English Puritans settled New England in the 17th century; John Winthrop, William Bradford, and other early Massachusetts leaders frequently compared themselves and their fellow Calvinists to the ancient Hebrews; and the Puritans bequeathed certain attitudes and a

Most significantly, Judaizing Christians created an “American religion,” which turns out to be Calvinism transformed into progressivism with a Hebraic cast. One problem that a historian might detect here is that for two millennia Jews have not been pure devotees of the Old Testament but products of Rabbinic

bearings from that crusty New Englander John Winthrop, who also had wanted, albeit in a different context, to build “a city on a hill.”

Like Winthrop and the Jews, all of these heroes relished those passages from Deuteronomy about “choosing life” for themselves and their progeny. And those who disapproved of Reagan were the “ones who hate America—for many of the same religion-mocking reasons that made them ridicule Woodrow Wilson.” Gelernter concludes in overdrive: those who hate us are guilty of “anti-Christianism and anti-Semitism” while being unalterably opposed to “a founder of this nation,” John Winthrop, who built the American religion with “his humanitarian decency along with his radical, God-fearing Americanism.”

Despite my own intellectual respect for the Puritans, I find it hard to recognize them or American Calvinism in Gelernter’s encomia. If he had done his homework, he would not be proclaiming the “humanitarian decency” and religious tolerance of his 17th-century subjects. (Tell it to the Quakers and Catholics!) And does it make sense to remember Oliver Cromwell, for whom New England Calvinists named their towns, as a “humanitarian”? The answer might depend on whether the respondent were a Sephardic Jew, resettled in a friendly English Commonwealth, or an Irish Catholic being hunted down by Cromwell’s Model Army. Equally questionable is whether one can reasonably attach a Puritan heritage to progressive and democratic forces—or activist presidents—centuries after self-described Puritans departed the scene.

One might never know from perusing Gelernter that the Puritans sold and kept slaves. His global democratic hero, Wilson, came from Calvinist Presbyterians who fought Lincoln; Wilson, when he was not “standing at the center of classical Americanism,” was imposing

## IT IS HARD TO ASSOCIATE TALMUDIC LEGALISTS WITH JOHN WINTHROP AND COTTON MATHER, NEITHER OF WHOM WAS A RABBINIC JEW.

rhetorical style to later Americans. Equally true, the Puritans and other Calvinists treated the Jews better than had European Catholics, a situation that might have resulted from the strongly Old Testament-influenced Christianity that the Calvinists adopted. European Calvinists also had a reputation, not undeserved, for preferring republican to monarchical government.

It was easy for Jews of a certain generation, before the rise of multiculturalism, to identify with a Puritan America. If they had to live in a Christian society, that one was clearly of a kind that was least hostile to them. Harvard, Yale, and other Calvinist institutions once forced their students to learn Hebrew; Puritans and their descendants took Hebrew names; and the Massachusetts Bay Colony seriously considered making the ancient Jewish tongue its official language. In England, the Calvinist Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, brought Jews back to his commonwealth after an official absence of 350 years. Jews returned to England with full communal rights and religious freedom.

Gelernter dwells on the presumed moral and theological similarities between Jews and Calvinists. Although he has to concede that Puritans, unlike Jews, were Christians, he calls attention to their shared Old Testament notions of justice and divine retribution for sin.

law and Talmudic guidance. How they understand the Old Testament has come through this continuing filter, just as the Calvinist understanding of the same document reflects the teachings of the New Testament, particularly the Pauline epistles. It is hard to associate Talmudic legalists with John Winthrop and Cotton Mather, neither of whom was a Rabbinic Jew; they were Christians who borrowed images from the Hebrew Scriptures and found parallels between their group and the ancient Hebrews. While Calvinists were admirably free from anti-Semitism and developed a Christian theology that relied on the Old Testament, they were not Jewish surrogates building a “religion of Americanism.”

Even more dubious is the attempt to link Puritanism to those political heroes in the American past whom Gelernter finds personally agreeable. Thus we are shown Abraham Lincoln, the son of hard-shell Baptists, invoking the divine will in his struggle against slavery; Woodrow Wilson, the grandson of a Presbyterian minister, fighting a war to make the world safe for democracy; and Harry Truman waging a new crusade for democracy while reading the Bible repeatedly from beginning to end. The same Calvinist grace is then fast-forwarded to the latter-day global democrats Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Both apparently took their moral



racial segregation on civil-service jobs or embroiling his country in foreign wars. America's largest Calvinist concentrations in the 19th century were in the antebellum South, and the South's most esteemed Calvinist theologians, Robert Lewis Dabney and J.H. Thornwell, supported slavery with enthusiasm.

It is startling that an educated adult would believe that a lack of fondness for Wilson and other activist presidents points to anti-Semitic and/or anti-American baggage. As the descendant of Jews who were on the losing side of the First World War, I was raised to hate Wilson as an enemy of the Habsburg Empire. And it is certainly possible to despise Wilson's oratory—which John Lukacs refers to as “warmed-over oatmeal”—without disliking the Old Testament.

Gelernter's depiction of good guys and bad guys and the attitudes he attaches to both are readily contestable. Samuel Johnson is brought up negatively, as an “anti-American” and Anglican monarchist who disliked the colonial revolutionaries. But Johnson mocked the revolutionaries as “slave-drivers” whose “yelping about liberty” exuded hypocrisy. Unlike Lincoln, whom Gelernter presents as a biblically inspired opponent of slavery, Johnson devoted himself to abolition and the betterment of blacks throughout his adult life. In England, anti-slavery crusaders, who by the 1830s had succeeded in ending slavery in the British Empire, were often Anglican High Tories. (Gelernter tries to deal with such inconvenient facts by indicating that “Puritans” could be found in non-Puritan confessions as well.) And there are historians who have criticized Lincoln's war policy but never, to my knowledge, Christianity or its Hebraic antecedents. One such historian, Forrest McDonald, has lambasted Lincoln with the help of his wife, who happens to be Jewish.

A possible subtext for Gelernter's fantasies, and those of his neoconservative sponsors, is a Conservative Jewish prayer book that came out in 1946 and that Gelernter likely noticed at religious services, as I did. This prayer book, still widely in use, features English responsive readings that call to mind “Americanism as religion.” These highly political readings extol the Puritans—who supposedly carried religious liberty to the New World—Washington's defense of tolerance, and Emma Lazarus's huddled masses, before saying nice things about FDR's “Four Freedoms” and the New Deal. Although a simplistic view, it is a compelling one for someone inclined

to believe it. It helps to build a bridge between one's minority status and progressive politics and one's adopted country. It also provides neoconservative missions with a religious and historical justification—or at least the appearance of one. But in the process Cleo is pressed into the service of ideology, and Puritanism is reduced to caricature. As Hegel was rumored to say when details contradicted his historical philosophy: “That is all the worse for the facts!” ■

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## Left Behind

Kids have too little to respect.

**By Marian Kester Coombs**

AS ANNA SINGS in “The King and I,” “It's a very ancient saying, but a true and honest thought/That if you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught.” In my case—teaching in the middle and high schools of an East Coast suburban district—I learn not only about the pupils, their parents, the system, and society, but also about the globalizing processes that have produced these children, these canaries in the mineshaft of Western civilization.

The balance of power and the dominant institutional culture within the public schools have changed profoundly. No more subordinated hierarchy of youths competing to be patted on the head by adult authority figures. Power is now in the hands of the inmates, and their preoccupation is with respect—and, of course, its opposite, “dissing.” An obsession imported from

the mean streets, this demand, backed up by physical force and psychological intimidation, stands in stark contrast to the almost complete lack of deference shown to authorities.

The new school culture thus throbs with barely constrained chaos. Teachers who lack the will or stamina to be on constant guard against the student stewpot boiling over are abandoning the profession in droves. But however great the pressure on teachers and administrators to make a show of (unearned) respect to kids, far greater is the pressure on kids themselves. The ghetto/barrio practice of “playing the dozens”—defined by the *Urban Dictionary* as “a pursuit, native to Southside black youths, the prime practitioners thereof, in which each attempts to outwit the other by deriding him with a greater and more prodigious succession of epithets”—is firmly entrenched in all

but the tiniest rural public schools. Tame example: “Your mother is so fat, her blood type is Ragu.” After spending most of their time trying to survive the onslaught of taunts, it’s no wonder kids have little energy left for higher mental pursuits.

The inversion of respect—its redefinition as idle malice and heartlessness instead of achievement and sublimation—is not simply a matter of individual parents misbehaving. The entire society, now led by Baby Boomers, is viewed with derision. The young feel a sense not just of personal desertion but of general, universal abandonment. Their elders have somehow lost them the whole world and what would have been their place in it. That is why they are so angry, why they do not respect us—not just because some of us lie, cheat, fornicate, and cannot be relied on. They are rebelling against having nothing to rebel against.

## THEY ARE CHARMING, STREET-SMART—AND LEARNING PRECIOUS LITTLE.

Rather than addressing the strained social system—which would require more personal inventory than most are willing to undertake—our leaders argue that better education (and bigger federal outlays) will right our troubled youth. With its No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Bush administration has proclaimed that every schoolchild in America will excel and that all gaps in achievement between ethnic groups will be closed. But the one goal tends to militate against the other: how can excellence exist without mediocrity to compare it to?

Standards are fine, but they must be realistic. If they aren’t, people will move heaven and earth, subtly but with great determination, to remake the standards in their own image and remold the guidelines to their own comfort level. This has already happened all over the country with NCLB. For instance, one of

its lofty declarations is that “all students will master algebra before graduating from high school.” In practice, this has meant defining algebra downward and finally, often after several miserable years of “pre-algebra,” passing students on via bogus assessments.

Sample question from an actual “algebra final”: “This expression [insert trinomial here] represents the perimeter of a square. Which expression below represents the length of one side of the square?” Various complicated-looking polynomials follow. The correct choice is the original trinomial divided by four. But all this signifies is that one side of a square equals one-fourth of its perimeter, which is grade-school arithmetic dressed up as algebra.

Another troubling aspect of NCLB is that one of its chief architects, former Secretary of Education Rod Paige, rode to his position on the crest of falsified

test results from the Texas public-school system. The immovable object/irresistible force problem again: if you give teachers and administrators enough incentives (or threaten them with enough sanctions) to raise test scores, scores are going to rise by any means necessary. The favored methods in Texas and elsewhere are sharing answers to the tests with students beforehand and making sure “dumb” kids are barred from taking the tests at all by classifying them as special ed.

NCLB promises to reduce class size, a goal that requires hiring many more teachers. But where are these new teachers to come from, with the profession shrinking and the existing pool of candidates drying up? Every school has its horror stories of idealistic young teachers who throw in the towel after only one year—sometimes only a

couple of weeks—of being subjected to the Modern Public School Pupil.

Today’s classroom is a noisy place: students chew gum, eat danishes and drink Gatorade, listen to iPods and MP3 players, conduct loud conversations, throw anything that’s not nailed down, roam around, hail kids passing in the hall, sleep on their desktops, snap pencils, slam book bags, do a few rap moves, sit on each other’s laps, and generally socialize. They are full of life, charming, exceedingly street-smart—and learning precious little.

Miss A. is 22 years old, a new graduate of a small college in the Midwest where she majored in education. She was very excited to be hired by a large suburban high school to teach math, her specialty. Yet within a month, she found herself weeping daily in distress at the disrespect she had to endure from her pre-algebra classes. Many of her students were on their second or third pass through the course, and their attitudes were resistant at best. Miss A. fled her position before the end of first semester amid a flurry of non-teaching job interviews.

No one has to become a teacher, just as no one has to become a police officer or a member of the armed forces (at least not yet). Ventures like No Child Left Behind suffer from a blithe disregard for the supply side of the equation. An analogy from the world of homebuilding is recounted by two economists at San Jose State, Benjamin Powell and Edward Stringham. It seems California legislators imagined they could mandate affordable housing with something called “inclusionary zoning,” which requires builders to sell a percentage of their properties at prices below market value. Surprise! No one has to build houses either. Instead of the stock of low-cost housing increasing, new housing construction fell by almost a third wherever the feel-good zoning ordinances were in effect, and the cost of what was already built rose by as much as

\$100,000 per home. Meanwhile, in eight L.A. and Orange County cities they studied over a period of seven years, Powell and Stringham found only 770 affordable units built and 17,296 planned units not built—the equivalent of “\$11 billion worth of housing ... essentially destroyed,” according to the *Washington Times*.

Those who give speeches about higher standards and more teachers typically lunch in places like the Senate dining room. They would do well to spend a noon hour in the cafeteria of a public school. Kids in super-tight or droopy jeans and t-shirts reading “Yes—but not with you” or “You forgot to ask if I care” shuffle through lines that feature tater tots, fries, chips, pizza, Pepsi, and Little Debbie dessert squares. Ritalin offsets the sugar high.

But bad fashion and worse nutrition are not these children’s only common denominators. Their more defining trait is the forlorn look they share. Their clothes are not quite clean, their hair not quite combed. The classrooms are drearier than one remembers, the learning materials paltrier. An air of neglect hangs over all, as though some great patron had decided to depart the premises and sponsor some other establishment elsewhere.

That does seem to be it, in the end. The American elite has forsaken its own people to pursue cheaper labor in far-away lands. Income has stagnated or declined over the past 30 years for the lower half of American wage earners, largely because of poor-quality education. While we are off opening markets or fighting for some abstraction President Bush calls “the force of human freedom,” our own dear children are being junked—and those sullen little slackers are all we’ve got. ■

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**A senior Middle East official has privately warned the U.S. government that any attempt to attack Iranian nuclear production facilities could be met with extensive Iranian retaliation**

against Israel, against American military facilities in the Middle East, and possibly against Europe. The warning is based on unconfirmed intelligence that Iran has convinced North Korea to arm some of the Iranian missile systems (themselves based on Pyongyang’s technology) with nuclear warheads. This information cannot be corroborated at present, but it is known that Iranian officials are putting into place contingency plans in the event of an American or Israeli attack and that Iran is bartering oil and gas with North Korea. Iran’s initial retaliation will most likely be in the form of terrorism, through support of clients in Iraq and Lebanon able to strike American targets. Iranian officials are clearly worried about threats coming from the White House, and recent American overflights of Iranian territory have increased their concerns. (The American overflights are mostly for the purpose of testing Iranian air defenses in preparation for a possible bombing and missile campaign in late 2005 or early 2006.) The Iranians know that U.S. Special Forces are directing members of the Saddam Hussein supported Iranian dissident group Mujaheddin-e Khalq (MEK). MEK is carrying out reconnaissance and intelligence collection forays inside Iran from a base in Afghanistan near Herat. There is also a new operational base inside Baluchistan, Pakistan, near the Iranian border. Iranian intelligence is aware of the incursions and may have already compromised some of the 50 Iranian agents that have been deployed by the Pentagon. If the Iranians have succeeded in turning some of the MEK and making them double agents, the U.S. will be confronted with a flow of false information similar to the one that took place in the lead up to the Iraq War.



**Defense Undersecretary for Policy Douglas Feith has announced his resignation, effective in June.**

That Feith would go is not surprising, but the timing is curious. Pentagon sources believed that Feith would be removed from his post right after the U.S. presidential elections, but the White House did not want high-level departures from the Pentagon before the Iraqi elections as that would suggest policy failures. Feith has become a lightning rod for criticism over Iraq policy, the newly developing Iran policy, his close ties to Israel, and his practice of providing disinformation to the media. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has personally become increasingly irritated with Feith and has recently marginalized his role within the Pentagon. Rumsfeld, aware that Feith has been conspiring behind his back with the neocons at the American Enterprise Institute and the *Weekly Standard* to place the blame for Iraq policy solely on the secretary himself, has urged the president to let him remove Feith from office. There is also speculation that Feith will eventually be named in indictments handed down in connection with the Larry Franklin/AIPAC investigation. The summer departure date appears to be a compromise between the president and Rumsfeld.

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# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Oscars]

### And the Award Goes to ...

By Steve Sailer

THIS YEAR'S OSCAR NOMINEES for Best Picture constitute one of the weaker slates in memory, yet an enormous audience will no doubt watch the Academy Awards on Feb 27.

That the public still cares about the Oscars, or films in general, is curious. Now in its second century, going to the movies is almost as old-fashioned as such one-time rivals for the entertainment dollar as vaudeville and brass-band concerts. Yet although the average American spends over 1,600 hours annually watching television, compared to just 13 hours at the movies, film remains at the top of the pop-culture food chain.

Popular music strongly challenged cinema for supremacy in the sixties and seventies but has since splintered into micro-styles. In contrast, movies have become so expensive that only a few are released each week, allowing the studios' expert marketers to concentrate (albeit briefly) the national attention.

Despite television's pervasiveness, it lacks the prestige of film because, to be frank, as an advertiser-supported medium, TV aims primarily at women. A back-of-an-envelope calculation suggests that American men transfer about \$1 trillion annually to women to spend, so television networks (subscriber-supported HBO excepted) pursue female viewers.

In contrast, males buy the majority of movie tickets, so films cater to them. And, as feminists have been known to complain, in our society (as in all societies), renown accrues mostly to things guys like. Men just care more than women do about constructing vast hierarchies of fame, such as the Oscars.

Although female studio bosses are common today, the Academy Awards are still extraordinarily male-dominated. For example, women have picked up only three of the 385 nominations for Best Director and (alert Nancy Hopkins!) none at all for Best Cinematographer.

Female screenwriters have become scarcer over time. Frances Marion was the highest paid writer in Hollywood's first two decades, but among the 86 individuals with three or more screenwriting nominations, only eight are women, and just three are from the liberated post-1970 era.

The movies could certainly use an injection of female talent, although 2004 wasn't quite as weak as the Best Picture nominees would suggest. Three of last year's four most impressive directorial achievements failed to win Best Picture or Best Director nods. Zhang Yimou's visually overwhelming "Hero" was ineligible on a technicality. Brad Bird's "The Incredibles" was shunted into the Best Animated Feature category (although he received deserved Best Original Screenplay recognition). And, of course, the most audacious and triumphant film of 2004, the picture that Quentin Tarantino called "one of the most brilliant visual storytelling movies I've seen since the talkies," Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ," was turned away out of blatant ethno-religious animus. (Gibson is crying all the way to the bank, no doubt.)

These lapses allowed for a trio of second-raters to contend for Best Picture. "Finding Neverland," the story of how J.M. Barrie came to write Peter Pan, is a snooze, and the Ray Charles biopic "Ray," starring an inspired Jamie Foxx, is less than the sum of its admittedly formidable parts.

Some readers objected because I broke with the media conspiracy covering up the subject of Clint Eastwood's critically celebrated but shallow and manipulative "Million Dollar Baby," a paean to euthanasia. But I didn't want subscribers unknowingly to encourage attendance by any of their disabled, aged, or infirm loved ones, who might well think they were being advised to hurry up and die.

So that leaves Alexander Payne's "Sideways" and Martin Scorsese's sympathetic take on Howard Hughes's happier days, "The Aviator." "Sideways" reworks that staple of teen sex comedies, the buddy roadtrip genre, for grown-ups. It succeeds.

While "Sideways" is an excellent small movie, well worth its \$12 million budget, "The Aviator," which cost \$112 million, is an excellent huge movie. In basketball, an agile 6-footer always loses to an equally agile 7-footer, and the same deserves to be true in this Best Picture race because "The Aviator" is a blast, almost three hours of quick, intelligent entertainment.

There's even a pro-free-market ending as Hughes quells his growing madness long enough to stop Congress from nationalizing overseas flights and handing a monopoly to his TWA's enemy Pan-Am (led by liberal icons Alec Baldwin and Alan Alda, who are superbly cast as the sleazy villains they were born to play). And gentlemen, while Leonardo DiCaprio may be insufferably cute, it's time to admit he's an outstanding movie star. ■



## BOOKS

*[The Empire Has No Clothes: U.S. Foreign Policy Exposed, Ivan Eland, Independent Institute, 294 pages]*

# Naked Ambition

By Doug Bandow

WE ARE NOW LIVING in “interesting times” in the words of the old Chinese curse. The U.S. dominates the globe, but its conduct is widely reviled even by its friends. America’s president doesn’t believe in nuance or read much, doesn’t think he makes mistakes—regretting only an occasional appointment—and holds no one accountable for anything. Yet while he refuses to concede the slightest misstep in Iraq, ever more hawks have begun edging towards the policy exit, debating a face-saving withdrawal and blaming the administration for botching an otherwise admirable policy.

But is the problem so simple? If only Mr. Bush really were what his Greek chorus has long suggested, a reincarnation of Winston Churchill, could his attempt at international social engineering through war, occupation, and aid have worked? According to Ivan Eland, the answer is no.

Of late, Eland has thrown his lot in with libertarian-minded think tanks—today the Oakland-based Independent Institute and before that Washington’s Cato Institute. Elsewhere, serious scholarly dissent from an activist foreign policy is hard to find. Before coming to the think-tank world, Eland toiled within Leviathan: the Congressional Budget Office, General Accounting Office, and House Foreign Affairs Committee. It’s not a radical pedigree, but Eland offers one of the sharpest critiques of neoconservative foreign policy yet to emerge. And President Bush’s re-

election and reaffirmation of his foundering Iraq strategy give Eland’s analysis even greater salience.

The book opens with an account of the development of American foreign policy from its republican origins to its emerging hegemonic character. The country’s founders never envisioned the U.S. as an empire, although early Americans were not gun-shy: they used abundant force to add to the nation’s territory. Nevertheless, argues Eland, “the westward expansion should be labeled as nation-building, not empire-building.”

The Spanish-American War led to more typical imperial behavior. Then the U.S., according to Eland, “tried for the first time to rule a foreign people using brute force without annexing their territory and integrating their citizens into the American nation.” More than a century later, the Philippines remains an impaired, if not failed, state. Washington also acquired Guam and Puerto Rico, and soon thereafter Wake Island and a port in Samoa.

Despite sporadic intervention throughout Latin America in the early 1900s, the American people remained largely hostile to overseas war making. The great conflicts of World Wars I and II turned America into the globe’s dominant power, though not an empire. The Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union reshaped U.S. policy yet again, fatefully. As Eland rightly points out, if containing the Soviet menace had been the only justification for Pax Americana, Washington would have demobilized after the USSR dissolved. Instead, U.S. policymakers, seeking to maintain their global influence, developed new rationales for old commitments.

At first, advocates of an American imperium seemed embarrassed by the Soviet collapse. Somber diplomats were reduced to suggesting that NATO be retooled to fight the drug war, defend the environment, and even promote student exchanges. One could almost envision tanks being reconditioned to serve as unstoppable bookmobiles. More seriously, however, the U.S. and other states began pushing for alliance involvement

outside of its members’ territories, leading to an aggressive war against imploding Yugoslavia over a secessionist fight in Kosovo. Neoconservative luminary Bill Kristol publicly wondered at the purpose of NATO if it did not intervene—as if an alliance designed to prevent war was now an end to be preserved through war.

Today, of course, America’s overwhelming global military presence has another justification: fighting terrorism. Yet an imperial foreign policy has not made Americans safer. Eland argues that Americans have become the targets of terrorists not because others are jealous of our freedoms, as President Bush and others contend, but because of the U.S. government’s actions. Intervention, such as the occupation of Iraq, creates additional enemies willing to kill Americans.

Even without considering blowback, the cost-benefit ratio of empire is awful. The costs are staggering—think of hundreds of thousands of troops stationed overseas to protect wealthy allies—while the benefits are meager. Past empires gained some material advantages by routinely looting their conquests. But “the United States is constrained from invading, annexing, plundering, and enslaving foreign peoples and demanding preferential trade with them,” Eland notes. For this we can be thankful. Yet the upshot is that America can only beg its protectorates to open their markets and offer military support, pitiful pleas they routinely ignore.

Having established the contours of American-style imperialism, Eland next sets out to explain who should oppose it. In today’s red/blue political world, Eland tailors his arguments for conservatives and liberals in separate chapters. This is a risky approach, but here it works without undercutting the book’s intellectual integrity.

Eland first challenges conservatives to oppose empire. It seems like a quixotic task—after all, the supposedly conservative Bush administration has adopted an extraordinarily liberal policy of humanitarian warfare and nation-building. Eland tries to show something

of the absurdity of this: "using force to export economic and political freedoms means adopting harsh methods similar to those of the now exhausted international communist movement," he writes. Pursuing a policy of empire leads to results that conservatives, at least traditionalists, should oppose. For instance, Eland points out that war routinely leads to the growth of government spending and power. War and the preparation for war also inhibit economic growth.

### TODAY THE U.S. IS SUBSIDIZING A HOST OF ECONOMIC RIVALS DESPITE THE LACK OF A GLOBAL HEGEMONIC THREAT.

Eland dismisses the theory that promiscuous U.S. military intervention is necessary for a stable international order in which trade can flourish. "Even if a major conflagration occurs, trade and investment patterns will adjust, but the adverse economic effects on neutrals from lost trade and higher interest rates are small," he writes.

Moreover, imperium saps the vitality of even the strongest power. Today the U.S. is subsidizing a host of economic rivals despite the lack of a global hegemonic threat. When new menaces eventually arise, they will benefit from Washington's military overextension. Those who constantly taunt critics of the war as "appeasers" might ponder Eland's lesson from World War II: "Britain's expansive world empire also impeded the marshalling of resources when a major threat to the home island's existence—Hitler's Germany—arose. And when World War II began, the empire dissipated Britain's resources around the globe to defend colonial possessions against German, Italian, and Japanese attacks."

Eland offers equally compelling reasons for liberals to resist an imperial foreign policy. Although the strongest opposition to the Bush administration's actions toward Iraq has come from the Left, many liberals remain quasi-Wilsonians, dedicated to humanitarian intervention and nation-building when it suits

their interests (such as in Kosovo). Indeed, many on the Left seem most interested in intervening when there is no apparent American interest at stake, which makes the action seem selfless. As Eland writes, "While Western publics are unwilling to give up much for humanitarian interventions in faraway countries about which they know little, advocates of humanitarian military interventions are willing to sacrifice lives and money—others' rather than their own."

In addressing liberals, Eland proposes "humanitarian alternatives" to so-called humanitarian intervention. What he has in mind is not more foreign aid, another typically failed policy: "In the rush to increase foreign aid budgets, it is often forgotten that developing countries would benefit more from the United States ending import restrictions on the developing world's raw materials and manufactures (for example, textiles), as well as terminating subsidies to American farmers." The U.S. should also be prepared to admit refugees from distressed lands, and to the extent that security is needed on the ground to deliver aid, Eland suggests relying on peacekeeping forces from regional powers and organizations.

Eland adds a chapter addressing why "all Americans," irrespective of ideology, should oppose empire. Such a foreign policy inevitably distorts the political system, encouraging an imperial presidency and diminishing congressional authority. It's not a new problem nor one limited to any particular party. Eland's most important argument here, however, is that an interventionist stance makes Americans less secure. He enters into the critical debate about why terrorists struck America. There undoubtedly are people who hate American culture, freedoms, and values, but that's not enough. "Terrorists do not give up their lives and fortunes and travel halfway

around the world to launch suicide attacks unless they have some compelling reasons to do so (regardless of whether or not Americans agree with those reasons or the terrorists' heinous practices)."

The issue has generated heated debate. But Eland is convincing: it is the coercive actions of the U.S. government rather than the voluntary actions of U.S. citizens that bear the most responsibility for encouraging terrorism. "The U.S. interventionist foreign policy that is designed to maintain the informal American empire is the main reason the United States has a much greater problem with terrorism than other industrialized nations," he writes.

How to restructure American foreign policy? Eland argues that the Founders' relatively noninterventionist approach "is more relevant than ever." This means watching out for potential hegemonic threats but dropping outdated alliances that threaten to become transmission belts of war. Eland's basic stance is unassailable: much of what the U.S. does around the world today, such as defending Europe, seems to be the product of inertia rather than thought. More controversial but hardly less well considered is his argument that economic interests, including access to Persian Gulf oil, rarely warrant military action.

Most important, though, is Eland's contention that an increasingly active foreign policy makes terrorism more rather than less likely. President Bush and his neoconservative acolytes long have deemed the invasion of Iraq integral to the War on Terror. It is. Unfortunately, as Eland demonstrates in *The Empire Has No Clothes*, the president's misbegotten adventure along the Euphrates has infinitely worsened the problem of terrorism. ■

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[*The Universal Hunger for Liberty: Why the Clash of Civilizations Is Not Inevitable*, Michael Novak, Basic Books, 281 pages]

## Democracy for All

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

I WAS NOT SURPRISED to see that Michael Novak, the well-known neoconservative author, had written a book called *The Universal Hunger for Liberty*. I was surprised to see the subtitle—*Why the Clash of Civilizations Is Not Inevitable*. Although strongly opposed to the foreign-policy positions Novak has advocated, I can appreciate much of what he is attempting to do here. Intentionally or not, Novak has written a book that tempers the extremism of the likes of Daniel Pipes on the most beligerent end of the neoconservative spectrum, whose vision of the future involves ceaseless war and the very clash of civilizations that Novak's new book insists is avoidable.

Early on, Novak concedes that democracy, the form of government for which he believes the whole world pines, is an imperfect system, and he makes a perfunctory nod in the direction of Winston Churchill's famous dictum about democracy being the worst form of government except for all the others. Yet this book is nothing if not a positive and largely uncritical celebration of democracy. One would never guess that the transition from monarchy to democracy in Europe culminated in dramatic increases in government debt, bureaucracy, economic regulation, and rates of taxation—not exactly stunning confirmation of Novak's thesis that democracy is the form of government most friendly to free enterprise. These defects, as Hans Hoppe argues in *Democracy: The God That Failed*, inhere in the very incentive structure of democracy. Even if we were to accept Novak's premise that no better form of govern-

ment exists, that would be no reason to sweep the very serious problems with majoritarian democracy—which the Framers of the U.S. Constitution feared and despised—under the rug.

Although Novak recognizes the importance of intermediary institutions between the individual and the state (though it is surely peculiar for Novak, a Catholic, to cite Masonic lodges as among such salutary institutions), largely missing from his vision of a liberal state is a concern for scale, for local self-government, and for resistance to the usurpations of centralized power. There was a reason that F.A. Hayek once observed that liberty would in the future be most likely to be preserved in small states. Novak is not by any means alone in neglecting the issue of the proper size of the political unit; with the exception of the eccentric Rousseau, the question is all but ignored in modern political philosophy. But it is no less an oversight for all that.

The regime of liberty that Novak describes and advocates is one in which freedom is preserved by democratic elections, the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers (with particular emphasis on an independent judiciary), and constitutional restraints on government. What should occur to Novak at this point in his argument is that precisely these features characterize the present-day United States. Yet

ing upon each other have done nothing to restrain the overall power of Washington. As early as 1825, Thomas Jefferson was expressing skepticism about the role of checks and balances: if the branches were simply to unite and gang up on the American people, he asked, what could be done?

If modern history teaches us anything, it is that if you want to have a state with strictly limited powers—if such a thing is possible at all—then additional institutional restraints are necessary. Jefferson, whom Novak is fond of quoting on other matters, believed that in order for the states to preserve their rights to self-government they needed a mechanism of corporate resistance to the federal government, either in the form of nullification of unconstitutional federal legislation or of outright secession. Neoconservative circles have not been known for their sympathy to such ideas, preferring instead a strong central government along Hamiltonian lines. That this model has entirely failed to limit the power of the federal government has not provoked the kind of soul searching or critical re-evaluation among such thinkers that one might expect.

These structural issues notwithstanding, Novak devotes the most potentially controversial part of his book to exploring whether the institutions of the free society might be expected to take root

THERE WAS A REASON THAT **F.A. HAYEK** ONCE OBSERVED THAT **LIBERTY** WOULD IN THE FUTURE BE MOST LIKELY TO BE **PRESERVED IN SMALL STATES**.

the American government today is hardly the strictly limited institution—scrupulously confining itself to the enumerated powers granted it in the Constitution—that the Framers intended. The independent judiciary has ridden roughshod over the rights of the states and the religious and moral traditions of the American people (a fact Novak certainly deplores), and the checks and balances that keep the three branches of the federal government from encroach-

ing in Islamic soil. He wonders whether there exists within Islamic theology the potential for doctrinal development, whereby what is implicit in Islamic belief is drawn out and rendered explicit with the passage of time, such that fresh insights may be gleaned from older truths. John Henry Cardinal Newman, the celebrated 19th-century Anglican whose *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* led him into the Catholic Church, famously posited just

such a phenomenon within the Christian tradition. Novak is confident that ideas of individual responsibility and human dignity, which he describes as fundamental to Islam, may under the proper theological guidance be developed in such a way as to provide support for political moderation, even liberalism. He points to Muslim scholars who are anxious to carry out this very project, though he concedes the uphill struggle this woefully outnumbered minority have before them.

Critics may still say that Novak is too optimistic about this project. Perhaps he is. But Islam is a fact of life, and it is the faith of a billion people around the globe. The Christian world has had next to no success in its attempts to convert Muslims in any serious numbers, and while missionary failure is no reason to give up trying, it certainly does add a cautionary note to our deliberations. It is not sentimental hooey to hope—no matter how forlorn such a hope may be—that these people, with whom we live in this world, can carve out for themselves some kind of livable political order that befits human beings.

Novak frequently makes the casual assumption that democracy will lead to the liberalization of Muslim societies, or even that democracy and liberalization are essentially the same thing. But this conclusion is far from certain: the recent history of Algeria, as Novak well knows, suggests that more democracy means more Islam.

Still, Novak may genuinely be on to something when he detects signs of liberalization here and there within the Muslim world. Young people's disgust with the theocratic Iranian regime is an open secret. Indeed, the increasingly liberal political opinions of Muslim youth contradict the routine assertion that the Islamic world is bound to remain hostile to Western values. To the contrary, a United Nations report in 2002 revealed that an astonishing 51 percent of older Arab youths wished to emigrate from their countries of origin. Of those expressing a desire to relocate, only 13 percent intended to move to another Arab country; the overwhelming preference was to move to Europe or the United States. That more than half should have expressed an intention to emigrate was, according to the report, a clear indication of "their dissatisfaction with current conditions and future prospects in their home countries."

Why do they wish to leave? The most common reasons cited involve Arab youths' impatience with the lack of freedom in their countries as well as meager employment and educational opportunities. "The implicit judgment of how livable these young people consider Arab societies to be is evident," the report noted.

A 2002 poll conducted in eight Middle Eastern countries found that most people there hold favorable views of Germany, Canada, France, and Japan. (A majority in all eight viewed the U.S. and Britain unfavorably—even in Kuwait, the country that the U.S. liberated in 1991—but that outcome surely has to do with those countries' foreign policies.)

Middle Eastern youth are by no means uniformly hostile to Western

values, therefore, and appear to have little confidence in the present direction of their own societies. They find themselves at a crossroads, Novak suggests: "Young men and women can *either* hear the siren call of the political extremists and terrorists, who promise almost nothing by way of economic opportunity or political liberty to their people but only humiliation of the secular enemy. *Or* they can join in the effort to build societies of open economic opportunity and prosperity, conjoined to a regime of liberty and individual dignity, under a form of democracy compatible with Islam" (emphasis in original).

At the same time, the falsehoods, dumb belligerence, and obvious partiality that constitute the Bush administration's foreign policy provide endless propaganda value to Osama bin Laden and others who wish to recruit these alienated young people into a *jihad* against America. The choice that young Middle Easterners will make is very much up in the air right now. If the Bush administration wants to guarantee that they will direct their sympathy toward the militants, it should continue full steam ahead with its current policies.

These are precisely the policies that Novak favors. They only make life more difficult for the moderate Muslim, since they cause Muslim societies to close ranks against the U.S. and all it stands for and to cast suspicious glances at those whose ideas seem American in inspiration. (That is why open support from the U.S. is the last thing that young opponents of the mullahs in Iran want.) Thus the aggressive foreign policy that Novak supports has the paradoxical effect of isolating and marginalizing the very forces of liberalism and moderation that Novak himself seeks to strengthen and encourage. The resolution of that paradox will apparently have to await another book. ■

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[*The Bullet's Song: Romantic Violence and Utopia*, William Pfaff, Simon and Schuster, 384 pages]

## Isn't it Romantic?

By Leon Hadar

WHEN WE RECALL the very violent 20th century that spanned from the start of the Great War to the end of the Cold War—the short 20th century, as British historian Eric Hobsbawm dubbed it—the names that come to mind are those of the leading monsters who masterminded the mass murders of that era (Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung) and the buffoons (Hermann Göring, Nikita Khrushchev), serial killers (Heinrich Himmler), and rapists (Lavrenty Beria) who played supporting roles. We sit through this long horror movie, which opens with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914 and ends with the scene of the collapsing Berlin Wall in 1989, and we feel a sense of revulsion and disbelief watching the sickening images of Kristallnacht, Babi Yar, Auschwitz, the Russian Gulag and the liquidation of the Kulaks, China's Great Leap Forward to Starvation and Cultural Revolution, Dresden and Hiroshima. Is it possible that a homeless and failed artist from Vienna, a paranoid gangster from Georgia, and a pedophile and drug addict from Beijing led to the ruin of millions and millions of lives?

Well, they certainly did. There is no doubt that if Hollywood gave a prize for the best movie with the theme of mass murder, the three dictators would win, trouncing such deserving nominees as *Il Duce*, Generalissimo Franco and Marshall Tito, Fidel and Pinochet. But if you watched the entire awards ceremony, you would know that before the trophy was given for the best picture, there would be all those prizes for best direction, best script, and best soundtrack conferred to all those who generate the

many elements that together constitute the soul of a film. By applying his organizational skills and leadership, the director makes the movie happen. But it is the screenwriters, the musicians, and the artists who dream the intricate plot, fantasize about the various scenes, visualize the color schemes, and hear the music playing in their heads. Through their minds and imagination, they inspire and create the movie.

In a way, *The Bullet's Song* is dedicated to the creative and sick minds that helped write the script and compose the soundtrack for the man-made death and destruction of the 20th century. From their imaginations sprang the delusions of utopia and the ideology of transcendent violence without which Nazism, fascism, and communism could not have succeeded in stirring up so many people to commit so much mass murder for such a long time. The achievement of the revolutionary artists, writers, and intellectual warriors was remarkable in its effectiveness in helping the big and little dictators mobilize popular support for war and revolution at home and abroad. These intellectual confidence men turned out to be the prime public-relations operatives of the last century. After all, they created the conditions for the favorable reception accorded the likes of Stalin, Mao, Mussolini, and other bloodthirsty madmen by the glitterati of the day in New York, London, and Paris and by the “useful idiots” in the great intellectual centers of the West.

One of our violent age's leading propaganda geniuses was Willi Münzenberg, a founder of the Comintern, who invented that masterful disinformation device known as the political front organization. He seduced a generation of innocents to support the Soviets, including fellow travelers in the West, but ended his life as a dissident who was strangled by Soviet agents in a French forest. It's not surprising that Münzenberg is one of the leading intellectual soldiers and revolutionaries that Pfaff implicates in the 20th century's physical and moral violence. He was a masterful intellectual con artist who served as the role model

for communist and fascist propagandists everywhere, as well as for their liberal counterparts in the West, starting with one of Willi's earliest collaborators, Arthur Koestler, who after years of serving the communist cause became author of the influential novel *Darkness at Noon*. Koestler ended up out-Münzenberging Münzenberg when he helped launch a successful anticommunist front group, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF).

Connecting the dots among a dozen or so emblematic lives like those of Münzenberg and Koestler, Pfaff describes the uprisings they led, the political styles they invented, the propaganda they created, and the intellectual and aesthetic influences they wielded in the 20th century. He also tries to discover their Rosebud, that is, the yearning after transcendence that motivated Münzenberg, Koestler, and the other central characters who “in their lives and public experience provided individual accompaniment to the political history of the century.” They include the British archeologist and spy T.E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”); the Italian poet and nationalist buccaneer Gabriele D'Annunzio; the world-renowned French novelist and “Byron” of the 1930s, Andre Malraux; and German novelist and nationalist Ernst Jünger. Other intellectuals, storm troopers, assassins, and terrorists such as Filippo Marinetti, a leading Italian Futurist intellectual; French writer Jean-Paul Sartre; and Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara appear in cameo roles in his story.

Pfaff is a child of the 20th century, who not unlike Malraux became, as he puts it, “an ‘engaged’ intellectual in the painful foreign policy controversies of the 1950's (and since).” In fact, at one time he was affiliated with some of the anticommunist groups modeled after Münzenberg's front organizations that were financed by the U.S. government and American foundations, including as an executive of the Free Europe Committee (the parent organization of Radio Free Europe) and as the deputy director of the European affiliate of the Hudson

Institute, a think tank that worked closely with the Pentagon and other U.S. government agencies during the Cold War. Indeed, it seems that at one stage in his life Pfaff was a Koestler wannabe and had the makings of a leading counterrevolutionary intellectual warrior who could still have been crusading for global democracy into the early 21st century.

As an eager child watching such sagas of Hollywood imperialism as *Gunga Din*, Pfaff dreamt of joining his hero Lawrence of Arabia in exporting Western ideas to the exotic Near East. Lawrence, the "Uncrowned King of Arabia," was perhaps the prototypical romantic figure of the early 20th century and had significant influence on moral sensibility. Pfaff was ripped by the personality of the man and his intensely romantic character, as were the other intellectual warriors of that era, including Malraux, who tried to emulate Lawrence as a make-believe leader of the Chinese revolution.

Malraux was also an admirer of D'Annunzio and served as a Münzenberg agent in the Spanish Civil War. And D'Annunzio was worshipped by the Futurists and inspired Mussolini. Jünger, like Lawrence, entered World War I with the chivalric and romantic assumptions of the Edwardian period, becoming like D'Annunzio an avid nationalist and enemy of the post-World War I order and

serving the warfare state in contemporary front organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Institute for Peace, the American Enterprise Institute, and the "new" Hudson Institute, whose success in cheating Americans into the quagmire in Mesopotamia would make even Münzenberg and Koestler proud. Pfaff resides in what seems to be self-imposed exile in Paris, where he continues to write provocative neocon-bashing columns for the *International Herald Tribune*. He is a recovering warrior intellectual whose aversion to the neocons reflects the sad recognition that he will never be able to recover his own Rosebud, that intense yearning for the security, hope, and innocence of childhood that encourages men and women to dream of utopia and to recreate themselves as heroic warriors. The history of the 20th century taught him something about "the ability of secular utopian thought to inspire a lethal dogmatic idealism served by increased cruelty." Growing up, you learn that the answers to life cannot be invented and imposed on reality like a fine work of art. You become an adult and, like Pfaff, you can enjoy your peaceful retirement in Paris.

Reading Pfaff is like drinking good French wine. You have to be in the right mood and sip it unhurriedly so as to

of the violent utopian movement was the loss of the chivalric moral code that had limited what individuals or societies could do to one another.

The mechanized savagery of the First World War put an end to chivalry in the West, replacing it with a nihilism that people subsequently reacted to through individual transcendence and collective will, on one hand, and a longing for social utopias based on historical fiction on the other. The ends therefore justify the means; in fact, they provide a sense of legitimacy to the most degrading personal behavior. Why torment our consciousness with despair over the horrors of Abu Ghraib when we should keep our eyes on the big prize, a democratic and free Iraq that could serve as a model to the entire Middle East?

Indeed, it seems that the late century's commitment to the redemptive power of violence has reappeared in the early 21st century as many Americans have embraced the utopian vision of exporting democracy and free markets into Iraq and the entire Middle East through the barrel of the gun. Today we have Fox News to provide a platform for the intellectual successors of Italy's Futurists who, as Pfaff recalls in his book, demanded the "reconstruction of the universe" through the redeeming power of violence and war.

But while the bullet's song is being delivered today with great effect by the intellectual warriors at AEI and the *Weekly Standard*, we should recall that their predecessors at least had the guts to fight and even die in the revolutions they promoted. They were interesting characters—some of them had written great literature and were great lovers. You may be repulsed by their behavior, but you will enjoy reading about it, which is something that no one would say about our own chickenhawks. They aren't very romantic. ■

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## THE BULLET'S SONG LAMENTS THE DEATH OF NATIONAL AND PERSONAL CHIVALRY.

an ideological ally of Hitler. But like Münzenberg, he turned against the monster he helped to create and eventually conspired to overthrow him. Malraux also ended as an enemy of the French Communists and fellow travelers he once admired, like Koestler and the first generation of neoconservative intellectuals affiliated with the CCF (Irving Kristol, Sidney Hook, Melvin Lasky). Malraux was transformed into an intellectual warrior in the service of the counterrevolutionary forces of the West.

Now the torch has been passed from one Kristol to another, to a new generation of writers, scholars, and pundits

appreciate the aroma and flavor. In addition to the colorful portraits of his protagonists, there are bits and pieces of philosophy, theology, military history, dirty gossip, and poetry, not to mention the moving personal accounts. Even the long footnotes are worth reading. And the "liberal" Pfaff, like another one of my favorite writers, the "conservative" historian John Lukacs, cannot be pigeonholed with simplistic ideological labels. Indeed, *The Bullet's Song*, which laments the death of a code of national and personal chivalry, could have been written by Lukacs himself. Pfaff argues that one of the key elements in the development

# Fat Cats for Africa



The place is always described as exclusive, but that's one thing it is not. Davos is a Swiss ski resort for *hoi polloi*, an Atlantic City with snow, although

it's far prettier than Donald Trump's Jersey playground. Last time I was here was about ten years ago on the frozen lake for a car race that ended up in a humongous spin that lasted for more than a minute.

Davos only becomes exclusive during the annual gathering of fat cats—the World Economic Forum, as it prefers to call itself. GFC (Gathering of Fat Cats), however, is a far more appropriate name.

There is something ludicrous in watching world political and financial leaders jostling to rub elbows with brain-dead celebrities, but such are the joys of the modern world. Pretending to care for the poor is the order of the day, both for the suits as well as for the celebrated, and if one were a ten-year-old who happened to be particularly innocent, he might believe this year's Davos message: the end of poverty is near.

Davos Man returned home from the GFC last week full of dinner-party stories—how Bill Gates and Bill Clinton stood beside Tony Blair and Bono and Angelina Jolie and Sharon Stone and pledged to turn Africa into Palm Beach in the near future (by the year 2025, according to the economist Jeffrey Sachs; 3025 according to the economist Taki).

Mind you, everyone meant well. First and foremost among the assembled was the desire to publicize themselves and the companies they represented. The second priority was to network. Last but not least came the plan to end poverty, as noble a cause as there is, but for one problem. Nobody mentioned the c-word. Corruption—as in African leaders' corruption.

Bill Gates might have the cash and commercial credibility, Bill Clinton the soaring rhetoric, and Bono the blarney and celebrity, but if these cats manage to eliminate hunger from even one tiny African village, I will gift my beautiful sailing yacht to Monica Lewinsky. Call me cynical, but when economists, civil servants, politicians, and company suits start naming countries such as the United States, Japan, and Germany as the top sinners in the not-giving-aid-to-poor-countries category, it's time for the sick bag—especially when in the presence of mega-crooks like the president of Nigeria, top Saudi oil ministers, and—by satellite—Jacques Chirac, a man who is trying to pass a special law making him senator for life in order to avoid jail the minute his presidential term is over. (Chirac wants to introduce global taxes on air and sea travel and financial speculation to help Africa.)

Well-intentioned crusades against poverty in developing countries are good for publicity but little else. Accusing rich nations of not doing enough is just another way of ingratiating oneself with celebrities and the chattering classes. But the reason so many thousands of lives are lost daily in sub-Saharan Africa is not lack of aid but because too much money goes into fighting wars, leaving nothing for hospitals and schools.

Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are three glaring examples of this. Ethiopia has spent huge sums fighting Eritrea over a disputed border. Over 65 million Ethiopians can now hardly feed themselves, while the government spends bil-

lions on arms. Zimbabwe, once the breadbasket of Africa, is an impoverished nation because of Robert Mugabe's greed and disastrous anti-white policies. The psychopathic Liberian murderer Charles Taylor is living in Nigeria with the hundreds of millions he stole from the nation's coffers, and his protector, Olusegun Obasanjo, presents himself in Davos and lectures us on the need to help Africa. Ditto Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa and the prime mover behind the theory that AIDS does not exist but is an American plot to weaken Africans.

Hand-wringing by corrupt African leaders is nothing new. Africa is suicidal, and its problems are man-made. They began when the British hastily granted African nations independence. Ensuing tribal warfare in Angola, Uganda, Liberia, Eritrea, and the Sudan robbed their citizens of health care and education. The rest was predictable. Africa's epidemics—malaria, cholera, typhoid, and AIDS—will not be beaten by grand gestures from the West. The problems lie in African attitudes. One dinner in Davos for a fat cat costs more than the annual income of most African families, and I do not condemn his appetite—but I do condemn his rhetoric. How dare the Saudi oil minister open his mouth in Davos, when fat Fahd spends \$200 million dollars in his three-week annual holiday in Marbella?

It may not be politically correct, but the only way to save Africa from itself is to recolonize it. The only solution is good governance, an impartial judiciary, secure borders, internal peace, modern medical practices, and an end to kleptocracy. But I won't hold my breath till it happens. Nor will I ever set foot in Davos again. Despite the altitude, too much hot air. ■

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